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THE

WORKS

OF

THE REV. ISAAC WATTS, D.D.

IN

NINE VOLUMES.

VOL. IV.

CONTAINING

THE RATIONAL FOUNDATION OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH;
ON CIVIL POWER IN THINGS SACRED.
RUIN AND RECOVERY OF MANKIND;
ON THE FREEDOM OF THE WILL;
THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST;
AN HUMBLE ATTEMPT TOWARDS THE REVIVAL OF PRACTICAL RELIGION AMONG CHRISTIANS.

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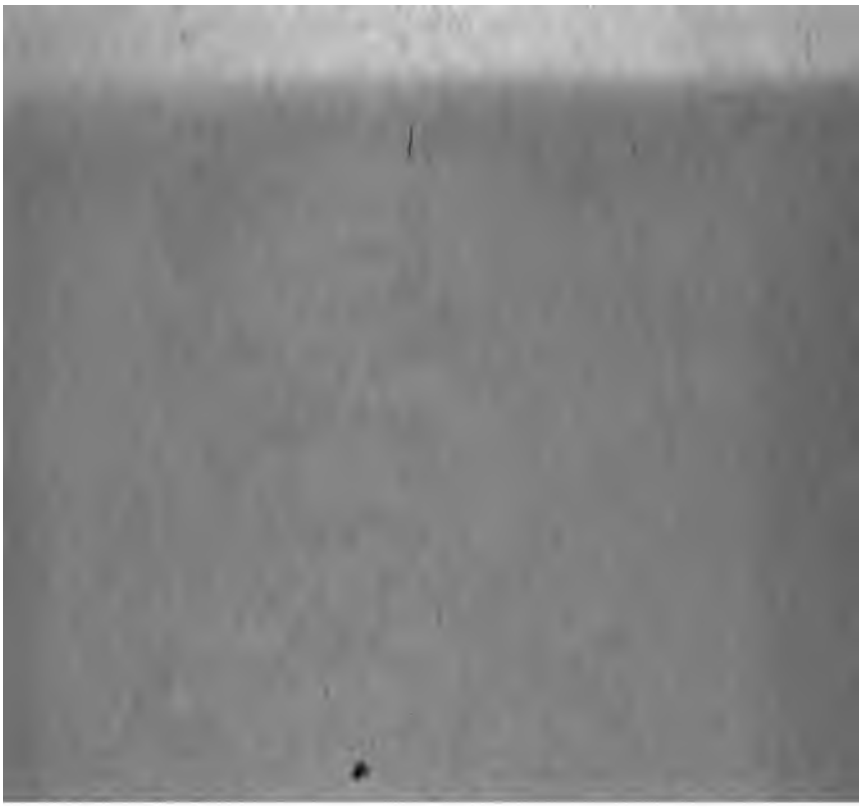


THE

RATIONAL FOUNDATION,

FORM AND ORDER

OF

A CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

CONFIRMED AND IMPROVED:

BY THE DIRECTIONS AND EXAMPLES OF THE NEW TESTAMENT.

THE PREFACE

TO "THE RATIONAL FOUNDATION OF A CHRISTIAN CHURCH."

THE principles on which christian churches are built, are so plain, so natural and easy, and so much the same with those which give rise to all the well-formed societies in the world, that one would think there should not be such matter of debate and controversy among christians, upon these subjects, as we have unhappily found.

For besides the reasonableness of the things that are required for this purpose, our blessed Saviour himself has given us so many promises in his word to favour this practice of holy fellowship, and to encourage our hope, as give abundant reason to our expectations of divine success. Has he not told us, that where two or three are met together in his name, there he is, or will be in the midst of them? Mat. xviii. 20. And when St. Peter made a glorious confession of his faith in Jesus the Son of God, the promised Saviour; upon this rock, said he, will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

So that if there is found but such faithfulness, such christian virtues of meekness, patience and forbearance, as may be justly expected among christians, I would hope such settlements as these might continue without interruption. And I trust I have here represented these things so faithfully, so plainly and clearly, that no single person, in any part of his practice, will find his conscience imposed upon by any article or canon here mentioned; nor will any society find itself obliged to do any thing in receiving, containing or excluding any persons from their church, but what lies natural and easy before the minds of persons, who do but exercise the common reason by which they conduct themselves in the affairs of human life.

Nor is there any thing here asserted, which confines christians to so exact an uniformity in their principles and practices, but by the exercise of their reason, with a small degree of charity, they may make and allow such alterations, as will assist and promote the general peace and edification of the churches, under the care and patronage of Jesus the great Shepherd.

And upon these foundations, if the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his Spirit, which is promised to assist the christian church, does but continue among his ordinances, from time to time, we may hope to find a comfortable succession and increase of members added to the church, and built up in faith, love and holiness, till our Lord Jesus Christ himself shall return to this world, and finish the great and important work of judgment.

I would only add further, with regard more especially to the questions relating to christian communion, that if any thing contained in them may be effectual through the divine blessing, to set the terms of christian-fellowship in a juster light, to secure the great and necessary principles of christianity, to remove any causes of offence from among the churches, and to lead the several parties of christians, to more moderate and charitable sentiments concerning each other, I shall have abundant reason to rejoice in my attempt, and give glory to the God of truth and peace.

Stoke-Newington,
March 25, 1747.

THE RATIONAL FOUNDATION,

FORM AND ORDER OF

A CHRISTIAN CHURCH,

Confirmed and improved: by the Directions and Examples of the New Testament.

SECTION I.—*Reason and Revelation agree to require Social Religion.*

I. MAN is an intellectual and sociable being, and he owes honour and worship to God his Creator, in his social as well as his single capacity: He owes also assistance to his fellow-creatures, in the affairs of religion, as well as in those of the natural and civil life. Social religion is therefore the duty of every man, where he can meet with such fellow-worshippers, as to lay a foundation for amicable union in the same acts of worship, and for mutual help in religious concerns: And these three following reasons, among others, oblige him to it:

1. As he is bound to express to God in secret, and alone, what sense he has of the divine being, attributes, and government, so he is obliged to join with others, and publicly to declare to the world, what an awful and honourable apprehension he has of the same things: And this, that he may do honour to God amongst men, or glorify his name amongst his fellow-creatures; which secret religion cannot do. This is the chief end with regard to God, for which man's very nature is made sociable, and for which he is constituted by providence in human society. This is the first spring, and the perpetual foundation, of all social and public religion: For this end, social honours paid to God shall be everlasting. This is practised in the society of holy angels, those "sons of God, who sang together, and shouted for joy, when the foundations of the earth were laid; and who met together at certain seasons, to present themselves before God;" Job xxxviii. 7. and i. 6. and ii. 1. This is required in our world of sinful men; so it will be, doubtless, in the world of separate spirits, who are described as a *church* or *religious assembly;* Heb. xii. 13. And so in the world of the resurrection, when the high praises of God and the Lamb shall be for ever on their tongues.

2. Man, in his single capacity, is obliged to perform acts of secret religion to God, because, in that capacity, he wants *many favours* from God; such as health, safety, food, raiment, &c. He is always receiving some of these favours, and always

waiting for more. And so also every man, in his social capacity, for the same reason, is under obligation to perform acts of public or social religion; viz. prayer for public mercies wanted, such as good governors, peace, plenty, civil and religious liberty, &c. praise for public mercies received, and a profession of his hope of public blessings, which he expects at the hands of God. If there were no other reasons for social religion to be found, yet I think the obligation of it would stand firm upon these two pillars. But I add,

3. It is a necessary and most effectual means of maintaining religion in this our world. Several persons, with united zeal, counsel, and strength, can do much toward the encouragement and assistance of each other: The elder, and more knowing, may instruct the ignorant; and all may strengthen each other's hands in the things of God and godliness. They may defend each other against injuries, reproaches, and the shame of singularity, and join in all proper practices to keep a sense of divine things lively and warm at their own hearts, and to excite others to the same practices of piety and goodness. Thus social religion appears with evidence to be the duty of mankind.

II. There are but two ways whereby God teaches us religion; that is, by the light of nature, which he has planted in men, and the light of revelation, which, in various ways, and in different ages of the world, he has communicated to men. And accordingly, religion is distinguished into natural and revealed. By each of these methods of teaching, men may be instructed in social as well as personal godliness, and learn to perform the several parts and duties of it, according to their different extent of instruction. As revealed religion in general, acknowledges natural religion for its foundation, so all the parts of social as well as personal religion, whether doctrine or duty, worship or order, so far as they are revealed and prescribed in the word of God, are still founded on principles of natural light and reason. Whatsoever therefore revelation has added, is but some positive or supernatural structure upon that foundation, without the opposition or contrariety to any parts thereof; for it is God himself that teaches us by the light of nature and reason; and we can never suppose that, by revelation, he will give us instructions which are contrary to the very principles of reason, and to those fundamental lessons of religion which he has written in our natures. Human reason is the first ground and spring of all human religion. Man is obliged to religion because he is a reasonable creature. Reason directs and obliges us not only to search out and practise the will of God, as far as natural conscience will lead us, but also to examine, receive, and obey, all the revelations which come from God, where we are placed

within the reach of their proper evidences. Whereinsoever revelation gives us plain and certain rules for our conduct, reason itself obliges us to submit and follow them. Where the rules of duty are more obscure, we are to use our reason to find them out, as far as we can, by comparing one part of revelation with another, and making just and reasonable inferences from the various circumstances and connections of things. In those parts or circumstances of religion where revelation is silent, there we are called to betake ourselves to reason again, as our best guide and conductor. And let it be observed, that there are many instances also, wherein we are instructed to pay the same honours to God, and fulfil the same duties to men, in the practice of public as well as private religion, both by the light of reason and the light of revelation: For God, who knows the weakness of our intellectual powers, has been graciously pleased to give us a shorter, plainer, and easier discovery of many rational and moral truths and duties by revelation, which would have been very tedious and tiresome, as well as much more difficult, for the bulk of mankind, to have ever found out and ascertained by their own reasonings.

III. When we have received upon just evidence the New Testament, as a revelation sent us from heaven, then our own reason and conscience oblige us to search in these writings, what new doctrines God has there proposed to our faith, and what new duties to our practice. And here, in our search after the things that relate to our personal religion, we shall find several sublime and glorious truths to be believed concerning "the blessed trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit;" and almost all the œconomy of our salvation revealed to us, above and beyond what the light of reason can ever discover, or so much as surmise. We shall here find also the duties of faith, in the name, and blood, and righteousness of the Son of God, for the pardon of our sins, and the justification of our persons; hope in his resurrection; subjection to his government; offering-up our addresses of prayer and thanksgiving to God the Father, in his name; seeking the influences of the blessed Spirit, to sanctify our souls; waiting for the return of Christ from heaven, and for our own resurrection to eternal life. All these, I say, we shall find revealed and prescribed, over and above the duties discovered by reason. And besides these, we have the institution of the two sacraments, to be ever celebrated by christians, as memorials and pledges of some of those duties and blessings.

And it is not at all to be wondered at, that the gospel should require of us the additional belief and practice of such doctrines and duties in our personal religion, as the light of nature knows nothing of; because the very design of the gospel was to restore

sinful man to the favour and likeness of God, which the light of nature, or the law of natural religion, could not do: The nations of the earth, and the men of the brightest reason among them, in long successions of ages, had made sufficient experiments of the practical insufficiency of human reason for that divine purpose. But when we come to enquire what rules Christ has laid down for our conduct in social religion, distinct from these evangelical doctrines and personal duties, here we shall find far the greatest numbers of the same things which are prescribed to us by the holy scripture, or at least represented as the practices of the apostles and primitive christians, to be also prescribed by the light of nature; we shall find them to be such practices, or rules of conduct, as upon the supposed revelation of the christian doctrine and sacraments, human reason and prudence would, for the most part, lead us to perform. And we may take notice by the way, that the chief peculiarities of the gospel in faith and practice, so far as relates to our personal religion, are much more plainly and expressly dictated to us in scripture, by way of direct and explicit revelation and command; whereas the affairs that relate only to social religion, excepting the sacraments are, for the most part, hinted to us in a way of narrative, and are to be drawn out by inferences; wherein much more is left to the exercises of our own reasoning powers, than in the matters of personal faith and practice.

IV. I would ask leave to observe here, that it is a fashionable and modish thing now-a-days, to represent the whole religion of Christ, whether personal or social, as little more than the mere religion of nature, revised and reformed from the corruptions of the sinful and degenerate nations, both Jewish and Gentile; which opinion I can never assent to, so far as it regards the peculiar evangelical and glorious truths and duties, which relate more immediately to our personal religion, to our salvation and eternal life in the world to come: Yet, in matters that relate to the constitution and government of christian churches, whose chief design is to hold forth and maintain our religion publicly and visibly in this world, I am not afraid to say, there is a most happy correspondency and similarity between the dictates of the light of nature, and the prescriptions of the New Testament almost all the way. In this affair revelation does not add a great deal of new duty beyond what reason would teach us, as very proper to maintain natural religion in the public profession of it. This will sufficiently appear in the following particulars.

SECT. II.—*Instances of the Agreement of Reason and Revelation in Social Religion.*

I. Wheresoever public and social religion is to be main-

tained, the light of reason teaches us, that several persons, who profess the same religion, must sometimes meet together, to celebrate the solemnities, rites, and ordinances thereof, and to worship God according to the rules of it. When this religion is professed by great multitudes, or by whole nations, it is not possible they should all be convened together in one place, so as to join frequently in the same acts of worship, to offer their united prayers or praises to God, in a regular and rational manner, and with conveniency and edification to such a vast assembly. In such a case therefore, it is necessary, that they should be separated into distinct societies, for the same purpose. And does not the New Testament sufficiently indicate these things to us, as relating to the social religion of christians? Do we not find them frequently met together in the history of the Acts of the Apostles; "that with one mind and one mouth they may glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;" as in Rom. xv. 6. Are not such assemblies continually mentioned and encouraged in the epistles? And are not christians exhorted to maintain this custom, and "not to forsake the assembling of themselves together?" Heb. x. 25. Do we not find the christian converts of the same country divided into particular congregations, which are called churches, who meet together for this purpose? "The church at Corinth; the church at Phillippi; the churches of Galatia;" 1 Cor. xvi. 1. "The seven churches of Asia;" Rev. i. 11. "All the churches of the saints;" 1 Cor. xiv. 33.

II. The light of nature and reason teaches, that where persons join together for any religious service, they must be agreed in the main and most important points that relate to it. "How can two walk together except they be agreed!" Amos iii. 3. For otherwise perpetual jarring and confusion of opinions and practices would arise in the very worship itself, which would destroy all the delight, the harmony, and decency of it. A worshipper of the true God cannot join in natural religion with a worshipper of idols. And yet, it is not every little difference in sentiment and opinion about the true God, or his worship, that is sufficient to exclude persons from the same religious society, where their agreement is so great, as that the chief ends of public worship may be happily maintained. Therefore Abraham and Melchisedec might join in the same worship of the one true God, though Abraham was taken into a peculiar covenant with special promises, and Melchisedec practised religion upon the ancient principle and dispensation of his father Noah. Gen. xiv. 18, 19, 20, 22. So Abraham worshipped God with Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, upon the same general principle, "and they made a covenant, and sware together by the true God;" Gen. xxi. 22—31.

And does not the New Testament teach us the same practice, viz. that where persons would be united in christian worship and religious society, they must agree in their religion so far at least, as to make a credible profession of their being the sincere disciples of Christ, and must make known their agreement in all the necessary principles of christianity*. They must profess not only the one true God, but faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord, in his most important characters and offices, together with such repentance of sin, and such a visible practice of holiness, as may give reason to hope their profession is sincere. In the primitive times they *confessed their faith*, and then *shewed their works;* Acts xix. 18. and thereby proved their profession to be sincere, and their faith to be a true or *living faith;* James ii. 17, 18. It was commanded that the Jews *should bring forth fruits meet for repentance;* in order to be admitted to St. John's baptism; Mat. iii. 8. And surely then it must be required to the baptism of christianity, or an union with the disciples of Christ†. They are generally described to be such *as worship God, through Jesus Christ our Lord;* and profess that faith which worketh by love; which is the substance of christianity in a very few words. And though there are, and will be, some lesser differences in sentiment among christians in all ages, and though they are as great as were between the Jewish and the Gentile converts in primitive times; yet the New Testament teaches, that they may all unite in the same christian society, and *receive one another in the Lord;* that is, to all the privileges of fellow-christians, and the fellowship of gospel-ordinances, even upon as large a foot *as Christ has received them;* Rom. xiv. 3. and xv. 7. Whether they are strong or *weak in the faith*, they are to be thus received, without entangling their minds with *more doubtful and disputable things;* Rom. xiv. 1. that is, whether they eat herbs or flesh, or believe *some days were holy, or every day alike;* verses 3—5.

III. Again, The light of reason teacheth, that there must be a mutual consent, compact, or agreement, amongst such persons as profess the same religion, to walk according to the directions and dictates of it, and to assist and encourage, to join and support one another, in the profession and practice of it, as well as to meet and worship together at a certain season, and a certain place. This engagement for mutual assistance is very

* Here it is not proper to divert so far from my subject, as to enter into a debate how many of the christian doctrines are of absolute necessity to make a disciple of Christ, or a true christian: This is an endless controversy, according to the different opinions of men.

† Let it be observed, that in this, and other parts of my discourse, I speak only of adult persons, who are capable of professing their faith; being not willing to embarrass this discourse with the controversy relating to infants, their discipleship, or their baptism.

necessary, for the support of any religion in the world; and without such an agreement as to time and place, a company of men cannot meet for any purpose whatsoever, either in things civil or religious*.

If there be any precise time, and any particular place appointed for this purpose by divine revelation, reason immediately determines that we must meet at that time and that place: But where there is not any such divine direction, there the place and time must be concerted and agreed by those who are united in such a society; nor has any one person power to impose his will or humour upon the rest. The acts of religion must be all free and voluntary.

Now what saith the New Testament in this case? The union, for mutual agreement among particular christians for this purpose, which is the bond of their society, is expressed by St. Paul, or, at least, it is included in that phrase *of receiving one another, as Christ has received us;* Rom. xv. 7. that *with one mouth we may glorify God.* It is a mutual receiving one another in the Lord; Rom. xvi. 2. The word is used to the same purpose; Rom. xiv. 1. and in other scriptures. If this agreement be not expressed so plainly in scripture as some persons might expect, it is because the very nature of things, and the reason of man, makes this mutual consent and agreement so necessary to keep up any public religion, that it was not needful for the scriptures to be more express or particular in the appointment of it. As for the place of worship there is none made sacred, or divinely appointed, under the New Testament; John iv. 21—24. *Neither in this mountain,* Gerizim, *nor at Jerusalem, shall they worship the Father; but the hour cometh, and now is at hand, when,* without regard to any particular place, they shall be accounted *true worshippers, who worship God in spirit and truth.* And therefore, some convenient place must be agreed upon by the society, since the New Testament determines none.

As to the time, it is confessed that we christians have not so express and particular prescriptions of the seasons of worship as the Jews enjoyed, neither as to their weekly sabbath, or any other of their festivals: but there is sufficient evidence from sacred history, that *the first day of the week* was the usual season of public christian worship in the apostles' times and in the following ages; and the day was known among christians by the honourable title *of the Lord's day,* so far, that the observation

* Where the magistrate takes upon him, whether with or without order from heaven, to appoint all the forms, times, and places of worship, and the people willingly consent to it, and obey the magistrate herein, this is an implicit agreement among themselves, and attains the same end, in some measure, though it may happen to infringe christian liberty.

of it was the characteristic, or distinguishing mark of a christian. Now since it was so early and so universally practised by the professors of christianity, we have just reason to think it was appointed by the inspired apostles, that christians should come together to worship God on that day, and give honour to their risen Saviour. Acts ii. 1—4, 41. xx. 7. 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. Rev. i. 10. And that they should agree to come to worship at the same place, is evident from 1 Cor. xi. 20, 33. and xiv. 23. *The whole church were to be gathered together at one place*, otherwise *they were to tarry for one another* till the chief part of them were come.

IV. Since mankind is mortal, and every human assembly will die away by degrees, unless it be supplied with new members, common reason directs every religious society to receive in new members, upon their appearance to be properly qualified, according to the rules of that religion, and the judgment of that society; that there may be a continuance of this religion in the world.

And in the same manner the light of nature, or reason, and common prudence, teach us also, that if the persons who have thus professed any particular religion, do either renounce it in principle or profession, or maintain, in a public and notorious manner, such a set of notions, or such a course of conversation, or of worship, as is inconsistent with it, this religious society will think it proper to cast such persons out of their fellowship, that they may not infect the rest, nor dishonour their religion: *For what fellowship has light with darkness*, a man of vice with the sons of virtue, a Turk with a Jew, or a Pagan with a christian?

And does not the New Testament represent to us the christian churches receiving new members on their profession of christianity? Acts ii. 41, 47. *They who gladly received the word were baptized; and the same day there were added to them about three thousand souls: And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.* And does not the apostle teach the churches to take care that they be kept pure, and free from scandal, by separating themselves from evil members, and by casting out those that depart from the truth, or are guilty of gross immoralities? 2 Thess. iii. 6. *Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly*; 1 Cor. v. 5, 11, 13. *When ye are gathered together, deliver such a one to Satan**. *Purge out the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump:* that is, *put away*

* Whether the delivering an offender to Satan, in the primitive times, did include in it the infliction of any sore bodily disease, though it be probable, yet it is not certain, nor universally agreed; but I think it is agreed pretty universally, that such a one was cast out of the church, and delivered back again into the world, which is the kingdom of Satan; who is called in the scripture "*the prince and the god of the world;*" John i. 4. 2 Cor. iv. 4.

from among yourselves that wicked person. If a man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, keep no company with such a one: no, not to eat. And those *who deny the resurrection, and overthrow the faith of some, are delivered to Satan,* and cast out of the church into the world, which is his kingdom, *that they may learn not to blaspheme*; 1 Tim. i. 19, 20. and 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18. Reason and christianity also join to inform us, that, upon the credible evidence of a sincere repentance, and a change of heart and life, such offender should be forgiven, and received into the religious society again: So the offending Corinthian was forgiven, and received and restored again to the love and communion of the christian church there. See 2 Cor. ii. 7—9.

V. It is evident to common reason, when such a voluntary religious society is instituted, the right of receiving or casting out members, or restoring them upon repentance, lies originally in the society itself, because the society itself is formed, and subsists, by the mutual compact of its own members; and whatsoever qualifications are required of persons, in order to become members of this body, it is the society itself that has an original right to judge whether the persons have these qualifications or no. It was upon the mutual acknowledgment of such qualifications, expressed or implied, that this society was first founded; and as a voluntary society, it must be maintained on the same foot, otherwise new members will be likely to be admitted, and imposed upon them, to the great dislike and injury of the society. Indeed they may depute several particular persons of their number, whom they suppose better skilled therein, as elder and wiser, to act for the whole society and particularly to examine into the qualifications of persons, and the merits of the cause, when members are to be received, or to be cast out; but they should never renounce their own original right. They may also appoint any particular person to go before the rest in this matter, to give them his advice herein, to acquaint them what persons are fit to be received, and to pronounce the sentence of receiving them into the society, or excluding them from it, according to the evidence of their qualifications: And this, I presume, will be usually allowed to be the office of the fixed pastor, or president of the assembly, where there is such a president.

And does not the New Testament generally give directions agreeably to this dictate of the light of nature? Does not St. Paul direct to the churches themselves his apostolic advices about receiving, casting out or restoring members? See his advice to the church at Rome; Rom. i. 7. and xiv. i. Ye saints at Rome, *receive him that is weak in faith*; Rom. xv. 7. *Receive ye one another*; Rom. xvi. 2. *Receive ye Phebe in the Lord as be-*

*cometh saints**. See his advice to the Corinthians; 1 Cor. v. 4. *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, deliver such a wicked man to Satan;* verse 13. *Put away from among yourselves that wicked person.* And in 2 Cor. ii. 6. this is called *a punishment inflicted by many.* And verses 7, 8, 10. the church was taught and required to forgive him upon his evident repentance, *to confirm their love towards him*, to the fellowship of the church. It is granted indeed, when proper officers are chosen and fixed among them, it is by their ministrations, by their advice and direction, christian churches should usually exercise this discipline; and so the orders of Christ are directed *to the angels of the churches.* Rev. chapters ii. and iii. But the whole work of reformation and discipline there required, is such as eminently concerns the churches or people themselves, and not the pastors only.

It is also granted, that many times churches do commit the whole care of this matter into the hand of their ministers, as being usually fittest to judge of the profession made; but it ought never to be so entirely given into their hands, as to renounce the people's right of judging in these affairs. *Diotrephes, who loved to have the pre-eminence among them*, assumed to himself the right of receiving and casting out members from the church; but he was severely reproved for his pride and usurpation, *when he forbid his fellow-christians to receive brethren who were worthy*; 3 John 9, 10. Ministers may happen to prove so injudicious, or so negligent of enquiry into the profession and qualifications of persons to be admitted, so subject to prejudices, or so engaged in a party-quarrel, as to fill the church with such members as may be very contrary to the sentiments of the majority of the church; and if the people renounce their own right in this affair, they may thank themselves for such unhappy consequences. I would add also, that if people entirely give up the right of admission and exclusion to the minister alone, they can never cast the minister himself out, if he be never so impious and immoral. Having found the constitution of a christian church to be so conformable to the dictates of right reason, let us consider what are the acts of worship which are to be paid to God in public, and in what manner must they be performed; and we shall find the light of reason and the New Testament happily agreeing here also.

VI. The several acts of worship which the light of nature directs us to pay to the great God, are such as these: To adore him with all humility, on the account of his glorious perfections,

* It is granted this text refers to Phebe, as a traveller at Rome, and desiring to hold occasional communion with the christian church there; but the reason of things is the same, or stronger, with regard to receiving persons into a fixed and constant communion with any church: There must be still a mutual agreement.

and his wonderful works of power and wisdom; to join together in prayer to God for such blessings as we stand in need of; to confess our sins, and ask the forgiveness of them; to acknowledge his mercies, and give thanks to his goodness; and to sing with the voice to his honour and praise. The light of nature directs us also to seek continually a further acquaintance with the nature and will of that God whom we worship, in order to practise our duty the better, and please our Creator; and to provide some way for the further instruction of those who are ignorant of that religion, and come into their assemblies to be instructed; and for the exhortation of the people to fulfil their duty to God and their neighbours. And if there are any special rites or ceremonies, such as belong to social worship, the light of nature tells us, that there they ought to be performed.

And does not the New Testament set all these matters before us so plainly and frequently, with regard to christianity, that I need not stand to cite chapter and verse, where these things are practised by the apostles, and the primitive christians, in their assemblies? Here adorations, prayers, and thanksgivings, are offered up to God, but in the name of Jesus, as their only Mediator: Here their addresses are made to God "with one mind, and with one mouth, to the glory of God, who is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ:" Here *psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs*, are sung to the honour of the Creator and Redeemer: Here *the word of God* is preached for the instruction of *the ignorant, or unbelievers, who come into the christian assemblies*, that sinners or infidels may be converted, and christians edified, and exhorted to persist in the faith, and improve in holiness; 1 Cor. xiv. 23. Here the great ordinance of christian communion, *the Lord's-supper*, is celebrated, by distributing and receiving bread and wine, and eating and drinking in remembrance of their common Saviour and of his death; 1 Cor. xi. 20—26. As for the other ordinance, viz. baptism, it being not so properly an act of public or social religion, I do not find it is any where required to be done in public; and though it might be rendered more extensively useful by that means for some purposes, yet it may be performed in private houses, or in retired places, as it sometimes was in the primitive ages.

VII. Since there ought to be such public ministrations performed as I have described, our own reason and observation of mankind sufficiently informs us, that all persons are not capable of leading these public religious services; viz. they are not all fit to speak usefully in the name of men to God, in prayer or praise, or to teach the things of God to others, in a profitable and becoming manner, nor with decency and exactness to celebrate all the rights and ceremonies of any religion. Reason itself therefore directs us that there should be one or more persons chosen in

every religious assembly, who should be wise and prudent, *grave, sober, and faithful*, and better skilled in the things of religion than others; and who should be capable in a more clear and happy manner to express them, that he, or they, may go before the congregation, and lead them in their several acts of worship; that they may give instruction to the rest, and with their lips offer up their common addresses to God, and celebrate the sacred rites of their religion.

For this purpose reason teaches us, that if a person so qualified be not found in any particular religious society, they ought to seek one elsewhere. And persons who have superior skill in this religion, should train up others, from time to time, in the articles of their religion, that they may be able to instruct the people, and become more capable of this public service.

If it be enquired, what the light of reason directs about the investiture of such a person in this office? I know of nothing more, but that the people should make all due enquiry concerning his qualifications; that they should ask the opinion or advice of other teachers, who are better skilled in this religion than themselves, where it can be conveniently obtained; and when they themselves also have had sufficient experience of his abilities, and knowledge of his virtues, they should agree to chuse him into this office; and that he himself solemnly should accept of it; and devote, or give up, himself to it; and that he should be with great solemnity recommended, by public prayers, to the blessing of God, in the discharge of it. This is all the investiture that reason seems to require*. And this man, thus set apart to the sacred work, should continually endeavour to improve his qualifications, and render his religious services more and more useful to the people, and take due care, as a faithful overseer, that the people maintain the practice of the religion they profess. Reason itself also teaches us, that if there be any persons in the assembly who give sufficient evidence of their being inspired, or taught of God, and of having any divine commission to instruct the people; these persons ought eminently to be received as teachers, and employed in such religious service.

Let us now see what the New Testament, or the rule of christianity directs in this point.

This is sufficiently evident, that scripture has appointed such

* According to the light of nature and reason, no man should be made a teacher, or president, or leader in any voluntary religious society, but by the consent and agreement of that society, to put themselves under his instructions and care. No civil powers have authority, by the law of nature, in these matters of religion and conscience; nor can any man be made an officer in any society, without his own free consent: And as all religious affairs regard either the honour of God or converse with him, so an address to God for a blessing is a natural and reasonable solemnity, that should attend the entrance into a religious office.

a set of men, or such officers in the christian church, as may lead divine worship in their assemblies, and may celebrate the institutions of the gospel among them. We find their names and titles frequently mentioned as *pastors, teachers, elders, bishops, shepherds, &c.* We find the duties of their station often spoken of, the characters and qualification of the persons described, their support provided for, and the people's duty to them enjoined. And since the church is to continue to the end of the world, or till Christ comes again from heaven, it is plain there must be always such persons to minister in holy things in every age.

In the very primitive times there was a great variety of talents and capacities, for the ministrations of christian worship, conferred by inspiration upon those who embraced the religion of Christ: These were taught of God in a more immediate manner*: And where these extraordinary gifts were numerous, either they needed no other preachers, teachers, or ministers, always supposing some wise person amongst them to be a προεστως, a president, or chairman, who, by natural rules of prudence and order, should keep their various performances within the limits of decency and edification; or, at least, they were not yet furnished with particular officers, being then but in an imperfect state as to regular order. Such was the Corinthian church: And where any apostle or evangelist was present, he is reasonably supposed to preside; or, in his absence, he sometimes gives direction for their conduct, *as though he were present;* 1 Cor. v. 3, 4. But in other churches, where these gifts were but few, the chief possessors of them, and especially the early and more experienced converts, were chosen out to be elders, or guides, and leaders of their worship, pastors, or teachers, according to their peculiar talents of exhortation, or of instruction: And they were sometimes called *overseers*, that is, *bishops*, having an oversight of the people, and their behaviour; being reasonably supposed to know more of the will of Christ than the common people, and to be more solicitous for the honour of christianity, and for its preservation.

It is probable that sometimes these elders, or overseers, which words are used promiscuously in several places of the New Testament*, might be pointed out by the direction of a spirit of

* These gifts were so much distributed in that day among the christians at Jerusalem, that even the deacons, who were appointed to take care of the poor, had such extraordinary gifts and exercised them now and then in teaching the people as evangelists. See Acts vi. 2, 3.

* It may not be improper in this place to point out the chief scriptures where these characters are used promiscuously, and seem to denote one and the same office. Acts xx. 17. *From Miletus [illegible] and called the elders of the church.* But in verse 28. St. Paul calls these very persons overseers, or bishops; Tit. i. 5. *Ordain elders in every city*; verse 6. *If any be blameless*; verse 7. *A bishop must be blameless*; 1 Pet. v. 1, 2. *The elders which*

prophecy, or by the gift of discernment of spirits, by the apostles, or other inspired men, in that day, as Timothy was pointed out by prophecy, to be an evangelist; 1 Tim. i. 18. and iv. 14. And in this sense the apostles and evangelists, Paul and Barnabas, Timothy and Titus might perhaps, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, nominate the persons fit to be ordained elders in the churches, and, upon the consent of the churches, might ordain or appoint them for that purpose; Acts xiv. 23. 1 Tim. v. 22. Tit. i. 5. And perhaps this is the reason why it is said of the elders of Ephesus, *that the Holy Ghost had made them overseers;* Acts xx. 17, 28. But it is hardly to be supposed that any persons were made rulers, teachers or overseers of any church of serious christians without the consent of the society, who were to be taught and governed by them in matters relating to their eternal interests.

Even when an apostle was to be chosen in the room of Judas, the hundred and twenty disciples, of whom eleven were apostles, joined in the choice of two persons, out of which the lot determined one to be an apostle. Acts i. 15, 23. Deacons, who manage the secular affairs of the church, were chosen by the people. Acts vi. 3. And still more reasonable it is, that elders, or bishops, who have the care of their souls, should be chosen by them who want and desire their instructions in such important concerns. In following ages, when these extraordinary gifts ceased in the churches, it is more evident from the histories of those times, that their overseers, or bishops, were chosen by the people. And the characters of them are given us at large, and very particularly, in two places of scripture. 1 Tim. iii. 1—13. and Tit. i. 5, 6. And certainly this is left upon record, that we might be directed in such a choice to the end of the world, as well as to give directions to Timothy and Titus in the performance of their extraordinary office at this time.

As for the investiture of men with this office, the New Testament gives us some notices that they were set apart by solemn prayer and fasting, and generally with *laying on of the hands of the* persons who were inspired, or possessed of some superior character. Whether this rite were designed to communicate any new gifts, or to pronounce an inspired and effectual blessing on their ministrations; or whether it was only retained in the christian church as it had been an ancient rite, used almost from the earliest ages of mankind, on several occasions, particularly in the solemn benediction of a person, or in the prayer for a blessing on him, or appointment of him to any special service, I am not able

are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder; feed the flock of God, taking the oversight thereof, the bishopric thereof, ἐπισκοπῆς. But our English translators have generally taken care to keep the word "bishop" for the most part out of sight, where it is applied to presbyters, or elders, in the Greek.

to determine*: This is certain, that the rite of imposition of hands has something natural in it, when we pray for a blessing to descend on any particular person, and more especially at his entrance into an office; as it were to point him out in a visible manner to God and the world. Good old Jacob *laid his hands on Ephraim and Manasseh*, when he blessed them; Gen. xlviii. 14, 18. And in Deut. xxxiv. 9. *Moses laid his hands on Joshua*, as his successor. The children of Israel also laid their hands on the Levites, at their dedication to the service of the tabernacle; Numb. viii. 10. But as there are different opinions on this subject, I dismiss it, without any other determination than this, that it seems to be a sort of natural ceremony, an innocent and ancient rite at such seasons; though I do not see sufficient proof of the certain necessity of it. Even as lifting up the hands to heaven, in prayer for a blessing on one's self, is a sort of natural rite or gesture, used by Jews and heathens, and not necessary to be used in every solitary or personal prayer. The laying on the hands on another person, when we are praying for a blessing on him, seems to be of the same kind, viz. a sort of natural rite or gesture, much used in the Old Testament and the New; and though it is not plainly made necessary on every such occasion, yet it must still be acknowledged it was often, if not always, used in the primitive and inspired times, when either gifts or offices were conferred by some particular persons upon others. And it certainly adds a sort of solemnity to the work; and it has so much of countenance from scripture, that I think it cannot be called a mere human and arbitrary invention of men.

This is certain, that such persons were to be trained up in a succession for this service in the churches. Timothy was required *to commit to faithful men the things that he had heard and learned of St. Paul, that they might be able to teach others also*: 2 Tim. ii. 2. And these persons were to *give up themselves continually to the word and prayer*, as the apostles did; Acts vi. 4. and to excite and stir up their talents for instruction and edification, to *give attendance to reading, to exhortation, and give themselves wholly to them, that their profiting might appear to all.* For if this be required of so extraordinary a person as Timothy; 1 Tim. iv. 13—16. much more reasonably is it re-

* Timothy a young evangelist, had the hands of the elders, that is, "the presbytery, laid upon him," 1 Tim. iv. 14. "And perhaps, at the same time, he was blessed by the hands of St. Paul with extraordinary gifts;" 2 Tim. i. 6. And he himself, an evangelist, was ordered to *lay hands suddenly on no man*; 1 Tim, v. 22. It is a question indeed whether Timothy, or the presbytery, could confer any extraordinary gifts or blessings; it is more probable for many reasons, that this belonged only to the apostles; and then this their imposition of hands could not be designed for the conferring of extraordinary gifts; but still it might be used to pronounce a prophetical blessing on the preacher, which no uninspired person could do; or finally, it might be the ordinary form of benediction, or of *institution to an office.*

quired of those who have no extraordinary gifts. I might further add, that these teachers and ministers of the gospel are required in the New Testament to be faithful, diligent, and zealous in the work of Christ, willingly taking the care, or oversight of the religious concerns of the people, in instructing and overseeing the flock, and watching over them for their spiritual good, as well as going before them in all acts of holiness, *and being examples* to all other christians *in word, in conversation, in faith, in charity, and in purity from all sin*; verse 12.

SECT. III.—*A brief Enquiry how far the Modes of the Mission, or Ordination of Primitive Ministers, are our Rule now.*

Upon this short survey of things, under this head, give me leave first to make one observation, and then consider the enquiry proposed. The observation is this: Various were the affairs and regulations of the primitive churches, relating to their several officers, whether apostles, evangelists, bishops, pastors, teachers, prophets, elders, &c. and in the nomination of those officers, whether by Jesus Christ himself, by prayer and lot, by inspiration of the Spirit, by prophecy, by gifts of discerning spirits, or by the choice of the people, &c. And in their ordination, or mission, by fasting, and by imposition of hands, as well as prayer: And whether this were performed by the apostles, prophets, presbyters, or elders, or evangelists, &c. Now all these things at that time were so much directed, governed, influenced, determined, and transacted by extraordinary gifts, and the inspired persons who possessed them, that I cannot find, in the New Testament, any one instance of the choice and mission, appointment or investiture, of any ordinary officer, or officers, who were not of the extraordinary kind; and therefore these things cannot, in every point, be rules or patterns for all following times.

If any one here object, that if we suppose the formation, ordination, and mission of ministers, to be so described in the Acts of the Apostles, as not to give following ages an exact rule or pattern for their ordinary practice; why may we not also suppose some of the doctrines and duties of personal christianity described in the gospel, to belong only to extraordinary times? The answer is easy: viz. That mankind are to be saved through all ages of christianity in the same way, by the same gospel, the same doctrines and duties. But the preachers of this gospel may not be furnished nor ordained the same way, when extraordinary commissions, extraordinary gifts, and powers, are ceased: For it is apparent, that these extraordinary preachers and governors of the church mingled the exercise of their extraordinary powers with some of their ordinary ministrations.

Hence it comes to pass, that it is so difficult a question, and so exceeding hard to affirm with exactness and certainty, how

many of these officers, and of these solemn rites and actions, were designed by Christ to be continued in the following ordinary occasions of these churches when extraordinary gifts should cease; and how many of these forms are to be practised in all succeeding ages. Most of the learned and inquisitive men who have written since, have greatly differed in their opinions of this matter, and left many things therein difficult, or dubious, after all their laborious comments. Let us enquire then what there is of all these things, that is certain and necessary in our age, and is not subject to this occasion of doubting which I have mentioned.

1. This seems certain by the light of nature and reason, that christian assemblies, as well as any others, in ordinary as well as extraordinary times, should have a teacher, to instruct the ignorant in knowledge, and make known to the church the mind and will of God in his word: they should have an exhorter, to stir up the people to the practice of their duty; a man of prayer, to address God in their public devotions; an overseer, or bishop, to take charge of the flock, to inspect the manners of the people, *and watch for the good of their souls;* a president, to be chairman in their assemblies, to keep up order there; and a grave and skilful person fit to administer the rites and seals of the christian religion. Now all these characters, capacities, and talents, are often contained in one single person, who may be sufficient for a small church; or, perhaps, in two or three persons for the supply of larger churches.

2. I think we may take it also for a certainty, that where God doth not interpose to point out the teachers, or overseers, in any christian church, by inspiration, there is no person or persons, either in the church or state, who have any rightful power, derived either from reason or scripture, to impose a teacher, or overseer, on any assembly of christians whatsoever, without their own consent; for it is they themselves must give an account for their own souls to God; and therefore, they must have a right to chuse who shall teach and lead them in matters of religion. Conscience is too sacred a thing to be imposed upon by fallible men, and the soul is too valuable to have its concerns entrusted with any persons, without our own agreement. And though the choice or consent of the churches may not be so particularly mentioned in scripture, when elders or bishops were ordained among them, by persons who were inspired, yet reason itself supposes it; and their extraordinary gifts from the Holy Spirit, proved and required the duty of submission and consent in the people, even if they had not a hand in the first chusing of them. The great God could do them no wrong by appointing elders, or bishops, for them, in an immediate way, or by inspiration.

But when extraordinary gifts ceased, we find many testimonies in the early writers, to the consent of the people in the choice

of their church-officers. The scripture itself makes it evident, that deacons were chosen by the people in primitive times. Acts vi. 3. *Brethren, look ye out from among you seven men*, &c. verses 5—7. And these were to be entrusted only with the money, or temporal things of the church. And nature, and universal custom, teach us, that physicians and lawyers, who are entrusted with the care of the bodies and estates of men, are not imposed on us by others, but are chosen by the persons who entrust them. If I would learn philosophy, or any science, art, or trade, I have a natural right to chuse who shall instruct me in it. Even children are allowed to chuse their own guardians; and boys, who are apprentices, to chuse their own masters. And doth not reason loudly proclaim this truth, that the guides of our souls in religion ought to be chosen by ourselves when we are at the age of man, as being a matter of dearer and more divine importance than any other; and an affair in whose success none can be so much concerned as ourselves; for it is of ourselves that God will expect a final account. Let us take heed then to our own conduct in this matter, and remember, that the New Testament has never appointed any uninspired men to chuse pastors or teachers for a whole assembly of people, and impose them upon the assembly, or upon any particular members thereof, against their will.

3. It is certain also, that due care ought to be taken that the persons be fitly qualified who are chosen into this office or ministry: And though private christians have a right to chuse their ministers, and may best judge of the general suitableness of their talents to their own edification, yet they are seldom so fit judges of the learned qualifications of ministers, as those who have been some years ministers, pastors, or teachers themselves, whether of the same or of neighbouring churches; and therefore, reason tells us, it is generally most proper that some of these more knowing and experienced men should be consulted in this matter; and after due examination and knowledge of the person, their approbation be obtained to encourage the choice of the people, where it can be conveniently had: And therefore, in scripture, as I shall shew immediately, we never find any ordinations by the people, alone without superior helps; nor should it ever be done, where such helps can be obtained.

4. May I not add, It is certain also, that there ought to be some sacred solemnity attending the investiture or ordination of every such officer? This has always been done in all nations, both in civil and sacred affairs. This ought to be done by a solemn and public dedication of himself to this service, with the prayers of the church concurring to seek a divine blessing on him therein. Reason itself dictates this as a most proper practice. And it is certain, that the union and assistance of a few

other ministers, both in prayer and exhortation, make a sort of beautiful harmony, and add solemn weight to this transaction of dedicating a person to God: They are generally better capable of offering up the prayers of the society to God on such an occasion: they are best able to give a word of counsel or advice to the new minister and to the people; which is a ceremony that should usually attend such an investiture into this office; for *every thing is sanctified by the word and prayer*; 1 Tim. iv. 5. And this will have a tendency to maintain a happy union and correspondence between different assemblies of the same religion, whether the ministers put their hands on the head of the new minister or no.

5. This is also certain, that the imposition of hands, or any ordination whatsoever, by bishops, or presbyters, can never be absolutely necessary to make a new presbyter or bishop; for the Lord Jesus Christ would never leave the subsistence or propagation of his churches, or the virtue or efficacy of his word and his sacraments, to depend on the uninterrupted succession of any office or officer, bishop or presbyter, to be transmitted from hand to hand, by any necessary forms of ordination, from the apostles' days down to ours; for then it would be impossible for any church, or even for any particular christian, to know whether ever they have had any authentic minister, whether they have ever received the gospel truly, or partook of any true sacrament, or have any just hope of salvation; because it is impossible far plain christians, or even for any ministers in our age, so for from the apostles, to be absolutely assured, that such ordinations have been rightly transmitted through sixteen hundred years, without any one interruption. And I might add, the only evidence and proof that any persons pretend to have of such a succession, is through the papal chair, which is attended with abundant uncertainties and impossibilities; as has been often shewn by protestant writers.

There is another reason also why the ordination, or imposition of hands, by either bishops or elders, or any superior character, cannot be absolutely necessary to make a minister, or ordain a pastor, in a particular church; and that is, that a whole nation may be corrupted, and every bishop and elder therein may be departed from the faith and practice of the gospel, as it was in England in the days of popery: then, if a certain number of good men join themselves in a church, or voluntary society, for the sake of reformation, and enjoying pure worship, they can never have a minister settled and ordained among them, while these corrupt clergy around them refuse their assistance, and even forbid and oppose it to their utmost. But our blessed Lord would never leave his people, who desire reformation, under such circumstances of impossibility to be reformed. There must

therefore, in some cases be a power of ordination vested in the minister and people themselves, without the absolute necessity of recourse to others, and this is called a mere independent, or a popular ordination; as that by bishops is called episcopal, and that by elders, presbyterian.

6. Will it not follow, from all these premises, that when there are no inspired persons in a church, and the christian assemblies are left to the ordinary ways of supporting themselves from age to age, and of supplying themselves with officers for their edification, these church-affairs are to be conducted by such plain rules and dictates of the light of nature and common prudence, as are mentioned before, and which, in the days of extraordinary gifts, were never contradicted; though those extraordinary gifts, at that time, might sometimes supersede the necessity of some of these prudential rules: Yet always keeping an eye to the conduct of the primitive churches, so far as the extraordinary persons and gifts, orders and actions, in those times, did not plainly interpose, to superadd any thing above and beyond what was practicable and proper in ordinary cases; and always taking care that nothing be imposed as necessary, but what scripture, and the plain reason of things, have evidently made so; and managing all other prudential concerns by the joint opinion and consent of the society itself? I think, if we act by this rule, we cannot displease Christ our Lord, even though we should happen to mistake in some little formalities.

7. Though the people in the uninspired ages of the church must always chuse their own officers, and perhaps, in some uncommon cases, may ordain them alone; yet, since in all the rules, directions, and examples, which we have in the New Testaments, about the ordination or mission of any new officers, there is mention made of some superior person or persons, apostles or evangelists, elders, prophets, or teachers, appointing or ordaining them, or praying for them, or conferring gifts upon them, or committing the gospel to them, or laying hands on them; and since there is not any one appointment, mission, or ordination, either of deacons or ministers, that I know of, in the New Testament, without some one or more of these things, I am ready to think this might be so far an example to us, as that we should not too easily and readily encourage the ordinations of new ministers, to be performed totally and merely by the people, without some person or persons of superior characters, that is, bishops or elders, engaged with them in this work; except only, as was said before, in cases of such necessity, where the concurrence and assistance of such elders as are sound in the faith, and pious in life, could not be obtained. Though popular ordinations may be valid, and may be sometimes necessary, yet

it seems more regular, according to scripture, to have usually the active concurrence and assistance of some elders therein: and where their assistance may be obtained, I cannot call it a regular ordination without them.

8. And in the last place, I would say, that since there are some texts in the New Testament, wherein single persons, either apostles, as Paul and Barnabas, ordained ministers in the churches; or evangelists, as Timothy and Titus; and since other missions or ordinations are intimated to be performed by several persons, viz. prophets, teachers, elders, or a presbytery; as in Acts xiii. 1. and 1 Tim. iv. 14. Since there is sometimes mention made of the imposition of hands in the mission of a minister, and sometimes no mention of it; and since it is evident, that in some cases popular ordinations are, and must be, valid, without any bishop or elder; I think none of these differences should be made a matter of violent contest among christians; nor ought any hard words to be pronounced against each other by those of the episcopal, presbyterian, or independent way. Surely all may agree thus far, that various forms or modes, seeming to be used in the mission or ordination of ministers in primitive times, may give a reasonable occasion, or colour, for sincere and honest searchers after truth to follow different opinions on this head; and do therefore demand our candid and charitable sentiments concerning those who differ from us.

And indeed, the chief ground of the differences between all christians in matters of ordination, is that wherewith I began this section; viz. that it is an uncertain thing, whether several of these particular modes and actions, in the furniture, mission, or ordination of a minister, which are mentioned in the books of the New Testament, do really belong only to the extraordinary days of inspiration, or whether they must be imitated as our example, in all ordinary occurrences of the church; always supposing and maintaining, that none of these ceremonies or assistances from other ministers or elders, are always and absolutely necessary to the mission or ordination of a new minister; since there may be seasons wherein the concurrence of good bishops, ministers, or elders, cannot be obtained; at least, not with any tolerable conveniency, or without sending abroad to far distant nations.

Sect. IV.—*The Rest of the Instances wherein Reason and Revelation agree in Matters of Social Worship.*

But it is time now to proceed to the eighth instance of church-affairs, and shew how far the common sense and reason of mankind concur with the revelation of the New Testament in this matter.

VIII. The light of reason further teaches us, that persons who are set apart for these religious services, and whose time and thoughts are much to be employed in them, that they may render public worship useful and entertaining to the people, and who have a charge to take care of the conversation of others as well as of their own, will not have much time to spare among the cares and businesses of this world, to provide themselves with necessary food and raiment, a comfortable subsistence, and the conveniences of life: and yet it is proper they should be honoured and supported above the very lowest ranks of the people, lest their ministrations be brought into contempt by their poverty: And, upon this account, in all ages and in all nations, the very light of reason has directed mankind to support and maintain their priests, or those that minister to them in things sacred.

And does not the New Testament and the authority of our Saviour, by his apostles, decree and maintain the same thing; 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. "Do ye not know that they who minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple." and that both in Jewish and Gentile nations? And "they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar; even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."

But let it be observed also, that though christian ministers should be so supported in *temporal things*, that they may not labour under perpetual cares and daily anxieties, how to get bread and raiment for themselves and their families, and that they may maintain their proper authority in preaching, reproving and exhorting, and live above the fear or shame that may arise from poverty and dishonourable dependencies, yet there is no rule nor example in scripture that should raise them so far above the people in riches or grandeur, as to become *lords of God's heritage*, or tempt them to assume sovereign *dominion over their* conscience, *faith* or practice.

IX. With regard to the poor that happen to be joined to any religious societies whatsoever, reason and humanity dictate to us, that they ought to be maintained by certain contributions of their neighbours, or the towns and cities wherein they dwell; for this is a matter of civil concernment, and a sort of natural duty to our fellows, as man is a sociable creature.

But if the civil society or place where they dwell, does not take care to maintain them, and especially if they are neglected, because they do not profess the established or national religion, reason tells us, it is then certainly the duty of those who are combined in that special religious society, to take care of their support. For what pretence can a man make to serious religion towards God, if he will not shew his love to his neighbour, and

especially to one who loves the same God also? 1 John iii. 17, 18. Now that this provision for the poor may be managed with regularity, prudence, and success, the light of nature teaches us, that one or more persons of the society should be chosen, to collect such charitable contributions from the assembly, and to distribute it with equity, prudence and goodness, for the support of the poor.

And does not the New Testament give a plain command, when the care of the poor of the church at Jerusalem was too burdensome for the apostles, or ministers of that congregation, to chuse out persons for this purpose, who were afterwards called deacons? Acts vi. 1—6. *When some of the widows were neglected in the daily ministrations*, or charitable supply, *then the twelve apostles said to the multitude of the disciples, it is not reason that we should leave the word of God and serve tables.—Wherefore, brethren, look you out among you—men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and of wisdom*, whom we may appoint over this business. And when they had chosen them, they set them before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.* There are also particular directions given, what sort of persons should be chosen to this office of deacons; their characters are written down at large; 1 Tim. iii. 8—13. Because it was designed to be a standing office in the christian church through all ages.

As the deacons are persons appointed by the New Testament, to take care of the money collected by the church for the supply of the table of the poor, so the same persons are very naturally and properly employed in christian churches, to take care also of all other contributions of the society, for the supply of the table of the minister, and of *the Lord's-table* at the holy communion. With them also are entrusted other necessary expences and outward accommodations that belong to public worship.

X. I add yet further, the light of nature and reason teach us, that all the management of religious affairs in a society

* It is granted that the deacons then chosen at Jerusalem had extraordinary gifts. Stephen was a noble speaker, and might occasionally teach the gospel; Philip also was either a preacher then, or might use the office of a deacon well, and so grow up to an evangelist; Acts vi. 3, 8. and viii. 5—13. 26—36. and thus have power to baptize, verse 38. as is intimated in 1 Tim. iii. 13. But these powers or gifts did not arise from their office as deacons. Some of them had these gifts before, in common with multitudes of converts in the primitive times: And these gifts might perhaps fit them the better to discern, who were proper persons to be supported out of the churches' stock, and to give a word in season occasionally to the poor, of whom they had the care. But the mere office of deacons, which consists in assisting the ministers to take care of feeding the poor, and of laying out the public money continues, when these extraordinary gifts are ceased, and the characters of persons, fit to be chosen do not necessarily include public preaching: Nor do we find διδακτικὸς or "aptness to teach," mentioned among the characters of a deacon.

should be performed with a decency and dignity becoming the things of God; and with due regularity and order; for he *is a God of order*; with gentleness also and condescension, peace and love, for quarrels and fightings destroy religion, and break all the bonds of religious society. And are we not taught the same things in the New Testament? Are not christians continually called upon to *put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness*; Coloss. iii. 14. *to do all things without disputings and murmurings*; Phil. ii. 14. *to do all their things with charity*; 1 Cor. xvi. 14. *And that all things should be done with decency and in order*; 1 Cor. xiv. 40. And that as they ought to keep peace at home and in the church of Christ, *they should give no offence, neither to Jews nor Gentiles*, but as far as *possible live peaceably with all men*; 1 Cor. x. 32. Rom. xii. 18.

In the last place, the light of nature and reason also acquaints us, that when persons who belong to one religious society travel to distant places, they should have some recommendations by epistles to other societies, which are built upon the same religious principles, that they may be received into their assemblies, and enjoy all the parts and privileges of worship and friendly society together with them. This is called occasional communion, to distinguish it from that fixed and constant communion, which the agreed members of the same religious society constantly enjoy.

And here also the New Testament very happily concurs with the dictates of reason and common prudence: For when primitive christians were called by providence to a distance from their own dwelling, and from that church with which they usually worshipped, they were recommended by letters unto other christian churches in the world, that they might be received by them into all the parts of christian-fellowship. Such epistles St. Paul speaks of 2 Cor. iii. 1. he needed them not, though others stood in need of them: And such a recommendation had Phebe, a member of the church at Cenchrea, when she travelled to Rome; Rom. xvi. 1, 2. "I recommend unto you Phebe our sister, who is a servant of the church of Cenchrea, that you receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints." And such a recommendatory letter was written by the brethren of Ephesus, to commend Apollos to be received by the churches of Achaia, Acts xviii. 27. "The brethren wrote, exhorting the disciples to receive him."

SECT. V.—*Where Revelation is silent, Reason must direct.*

Thus we have seen a variety of instances, wherein the rules of christianity and scripture, so far as relates to social religion, correspond with those which the light of reason and

prudence would dictate to wise and sober men, engaged in a religious society. Some of these are represented to us in the New Testament, as express commands; others we may draw by easy reasonings from the examples of the apostles and the primitive churches, as well as from the circumstances which are contained, either in the matters of fact, or in the exhortations that relate to them.

And here I would observe, that though right reason might guide us into most of the same practices, yet it is a vast advantage to us that we have so many of these things prescribed, intimated or approved by the inspired writings of the New Testament: For so imperfect is our understanding, and so weak our judgment, that the reasonings of men, even of a single congregation, or their humours which go for reason, would not easily agree in the same methods and forms of management, and there would probably be a far greater variety of opinions, and greater difficulties in the conduct of church affairs, than now there are; though even now there are so many, that render the christian world a theatre of perpetual contest: But it must still be acknowledged that one main spring of the controversy is, because the passions and pride and interests of men, will not suffer them to hearken either to reason or scripture.

Though scripture hath determined so many particulars in a perfect conformity to right reason, yet it must be confessed there are other things which relate to christian worship and order, which are past over in silence, or at least, are not mentioned and prescribed with such plainness and evidence in the word of God, as is sufficient to direct every single punctilio of our practice. It is the pretence of finding out in scripture every lesser particular piece of conduct in a christian church, even such as belongs to all religious societies, that has tempted men to run to the Old Testament, and enquire of Moses and Aaron for advice, where they could not find it expressly written in the New, and strangely to warp and pervert many texts of the New Testament from their native and proper meaning.

Let it be granted then, that scripture is silent in some little particulars about social religion: But even here we are not left without any direction, nor are we sent to uncertain traditions to make up for the silence of scripture, but we are naturally remitted to the common reason of things and human prudence as our guide*. Yet always, as I said before, keeping our eye

* The "sufficiency and perspicuity of the scripture in things necessary to salvation," is not at all impeached by this concession; for 1. The determinations of some lesser affairs, relating to public worship, or the conduct of christian societies, are not things necessary to the salvation of any particular person, or to the essence or being of a christian church, though they may be needful to its well-

pointed toward the New Testament, and forming our reasonings as far as possible on the same principle which seem to run through the social religion of the primitive times, so far as it did not depend on those extraordinary inspirations. Let us give also some instances of these:

I. Scripture does not tell us how many persons go to make up a christian church: But reason will help us to answer this question, if we consider that the word "ecclesia" or church, properly signifies an assembly of people, and so it is used in the New Testament, where it has no relation to a christian society, as among the heathens at Ephesus; Acts xix. 32, 39, 40. A very few therefore may be called an assembly, and may be sufficient to join together in christian-fellowship, that they may partake of *the Lord's supper*, and carry on the face of public religion, when there are no other christians in the place where they dwell. And on the other hand, there should usually be no more in a church than can meet together in one place, can act as one assembly, and join in social worship, in prayers and praises; for the apostle, writing to the Corinthians, speaks twice of *the whole church coming together in one place*; 1 Cor. v. 4. xi. 20. and xiv. 23. And the church of Antioch which was large, met all together; Acts xiv. 27. Perhaps those words Rom. xv. 6. *that ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God*, may limit the number of a church usually to so many as can join in attention and suitable meditation, while one mouth speaks in a way of instruction, prayer or praise. Such probably were the churches of Asia and Galatia, and in several towns and cities of which the New Testament gives an account*. But

being and its comfortable and regular subsistence.—2. When scripture is said to be "sufficiently full and clear in all things necessary to salvation," this doth not mean to exclude the common exercise of the reason and prudence of men, in order to apply the general directions of scripture to particular cases which occur, even in things which are necessary to salvation. As for instance: Scripture bids us "do good and relieve the poor:" But it doth not tell us how many poor we must relieve, whether two, or twenty, or two hundred, nor whether for one day or many, &c. This must be determined by the particular circumstances of every christian, and by the exercise of his reason and prudence, upon the special occasions and objects which appear. Again, scripture requires of us "to deny ourselves and to mortify our appetites and passions:" But it leaves it to the reason and prudence of every christian, in what things, at what seasons, in what manner, and in what degree this must be done, and how far we must go in mortifying all passion and appetite, or in acting self-denial, since it is certain we are not called to root out every passion, to resist every appetite, nor to deny every natural inclination. Thus the honour of scripture is still secured, both as to its "perfection and its perspicuity in things necessary to salvation," though in many lesser particulars, and in the application of general rules to actual practice, we are forced to recur to the exercise of human reason and common prudence, both in things of greater and lesser importance in the christian life. The scripture supposes us to be rational creatures, when it teaches us to be christians.

* There was a sort of union even of all the Jewish national church in one place three times a year, by the congress of all the males who were representatives of the nation at Jerusalem; and perhaps they might join in the solemnity

sometimes the word church is applied to a very small or a very large number.

The word Εκκλησια, or church, sometimes signifies a few christians in a house; so *the church in the house of Priscilla and Aquila*, is saluted by St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans; and the same church salutes the Corinthians in the end of St. Paul's first epistle to them, though it is certain there were many more christians round about them in Rome. Very probably Doctor Whitby's sense is just on these scriptures, viz. that this phrase is used concerning such whole families as were converts to the christian faith. And, besides, christians might meet together by agreement, in lesser societies for any spiritual occasions, and every such society might sometimes be called a church, or a christian assembly. Common prudence thought ten men enough to make a synagogue among the Jews. Our Saviour says, *Where two or three are gathered together in his name, there he is*, or will be *in the midst of them*; Mat. xviii. 20. But this does not prove plainly that there should be a church formed where there are but two or three christians: Prudence must direct in this matter, since scripture is silent.

But on the other hand, we may enquire how large may a church be? The multitude of christians in Jerusalem; Acts xv. 12. are called *the church at Jerusalem;* verse 22. and Acts xi. 22. Not that it is necessary to suppose all the three thousand who were converted; Acts ii. 41. and all the five thousand; Acts iv. 4. to be members of the church at Jerusalem; for this being done in the days of pentecost, multitudes of Jews and proselytes were come from other nations to celebrate that festival, as Acts ii. 9. who being converted, returned to their own home. And it seems evident from the history, that when the apostles, elders, and brethren were met together at Jerusalem, to determine the question about circumcision, the whole church, together with the apostles and elders, wrote the letter and sent messengers with it to Antioch; Acts xv. 22, 23. So that it is possible one place might hold them, and they might make but one assembly.

But supposing they were too numerous to meet together in worship at once, especially in a time of persecution, they might divide themselves into smaller assemblies, for preaching and praying, and might *break bread from house to house*, if that phrase should signify the celebration of the Lord's-supper; Acts ii. 42, 46.

Let it be further observed, that if the church at Jerusalem at that time was too large for one worshipping assembly,

of some sacrifices by the aid of loud instruments of music in the temple, according to the figurative worship of the levitical dispensation, so that they made one huge congregation worshipping together, or at least successively in the several days of the festival.

christian churches were but a forming at that time, and might not be absolutely formed and settled in the most perfect and convenient methods, for regular continuance and edification. Human affairs can proceed but by degrees, by reason of our weakness, even though they be conducted by divine inspiration.

Or perhaps, as all the christians in the world are sometimes called the church, so all who were in one city, may be called the church in that city, and the christians in one house may be called *the church in that house*, though they were not united by any other bond of agreement, but that of their common christianity. Yet I believe it will be found, that a christian church in its most usual form was made up of so many, as could conveniently meet together for worship, and consented to do so; and the reason of things seems to make this most convenient for many purposes of edification and mutual help.

II. Scripture is silent how any of the lesser or circumstantial affairs of worship or order, should be finally determined in a church, when there are some of the members of different sentiments, and make an opposition. But the light of reason and common prudence teaches us, that in such affairs which God has left to the determination of men, such as the appointing the place and hour of worship, chusing a minister, or the like, the major part of the assembly must determine it by their vote, and the lesser part ought to acquiesce, where it is not contrary to the dictates of their conscience, their edification in faith and holiness, or their reasonable conveniency. But if the lesser part solemnly declare, they cannot comply therewith, they may peaceably depart to another society of christians, who may be more entirely of their mind, for there must be no imposition; yet the major part may surely act for themselves.

May I have leave to add this further also, that if the society shall agree to have nothing determined in a church, without a vote of two thirds of the members, I do not see it unlawful to make this agreement: And perhaps if this were generally practised it might tend to the greater unanimity and peace of churches, because in any debate the dissenters would be the fewer*.

III. The New Testament is very silent about the combination of particular congregations, by some common band of union

* The conclave of cardinals at Rome, who are supposed to have the wisdom of this world in perfection, never will chuse a pope till two thirds of them are agreed in the same person: And hereby they keep the whole hierarchy and system of that anti-christian building and government in greater unanimity and peace. Why may not christians learn the wisdom of the serpent from the men of this world, so long as they do but maintain the innocence of the dove?

to make one national church. What does the light of nature teach us in this point?

I answer, there never was but one national church of God's own appointment; that was the church of the Jews; and he himself saw fit to dissolve it: nor has he given men any revealed order or authority from himself to raise and establish another: Yet certainly the light of nature may sometimes direct and lead many christian congregations, even all that are in a country or in a nation, who agree in the necessary articles of christianity, to combine together and agree to assist each other many ways by counsel, encouragement and support, in the maintenance of their sacred religion, always in a consistency with due allegiance preserved to their civil governors. The churches in a county or any particular district, may agree to send their ministers to consult together about their common welfare: They may chuse one person to transact matters of public and common concern for all the congregations in a county, and may bestow on him the name of an overseer, a superintendant, or a bishop; and so all the churches in a nation may desire their own ministers, or they may desire these their representatives or overseers, to join themselves in a common assembly or council for the public care of their liberty, or security of their peace, or advice in matters of consequence relating to their particular churches. And this assembly may chuse a president, and may call him their chief overseer or their archbishop: as I see nothing unlawful in all this, so neither do I see any ordinary necessity for it.

I add further, that many particular churches, by their ministers, deputies or messengers, met together, may contrive and agree in what manner to carry on the work of preaching, catechising, expounding, prayer, or psalmody; they may consult what subjects are chiefly necessary to be insisted on in preaching, at special seasons and occasions; what psalms or hymns to be sung, and how often psalmody to be repeated in a day; what days or hours may be set apart for prayer and humiliation, or thanksgiving on special occasions of danger, or deliverance, &c. And if these things be agreed with much unanimity, by many wise and pious men, met together, by the request of the churches, for this purpose; and these matters be determined, so as plainly tends to the common safety and edification of the whole number of churches in a country or nation, the particular churches which are there, and especially particular persons in any such church, according to the common rules of society, should usually consent and agree to such public, and almost unanimous agreements, of their deputies in these matters, unless they can shew some very plain and considerable reason against it. Reason itself, or the light of nature, dictates this, that a very few persons should not humourously set themselves

against such a general agreement in things which are in themselves indifferent; and which are left undetermined by the New Testament; and which must be determined some way or other by the agreement of christians.

But still I think it must be maintained, that though all the churches in a nation should be united and combined in this manner by their representatives, and call themselves one national church, they could acquire no divine right or authority hereby, to impose any new doctrines or practices in religion, any creed, or articles, or canons, or rules of worship, of their own making, on any particular church or person whatsoever, without their own consent. Neither the light of nature, nor the New Testament, so far as I can find, has given them any such power.

IV. Scripture is also supposed to be silent how far the power and government of elders, or bishops, may extend, though it calls them sometimes *rulers*, and requires the church to obey. Heb. xiii. 7. *Remember them who have the rule over you, who have spoken to you the word of God.* And verse 17. *Obey them who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls.* May they not therefore invent new ceremonies of worship, and by their authority determine any of those matters in a christian society, which Christ has left undetermined in his word?

I answer, if scripture be silent herein, let all church-rulers take heed that they extend not this power beyond the actual commission or grant of scripture. It is always safer in points of dominion, to confine one's self within the limits of the express grant or commission, than to go ever so little beyond it. When our natural ambition would tempt us to exceed these limits, our awe and dread of invading the province of Christ, should be an everlasting restraint. Besides, when neither the light of reason nor scripture gives sufficient evidence of any authority to assume such a power, why should it be assumed? Reason tells us, that no man knows what rites or ceremonies will be pleasing to the great God, beyond the plain dictates of natural religion, unless God himself has revealed and required them.

The great and blessed God, when he would be worshipped with a variety of outward rites, established a church in Judea, with a hundred ceremonies, and new forms of worship and order; but he thought fit to abolish them again when the Messiah brought in his more spiritual kingdom, that is, the christian church. Now therein there are but two such ceremonies, of most plain and evident divine appointment; *baptism and the Lord's-supper*; or, if you will, add the observation of *the Lord's-day*. And it is not to be supposed that God would abolish and destroy

a hundred ceremonies of his own institution, and give the fancies of men leave to invent a new scheme of ceremonial worship at their own pleasure, and impose new-invented rites upon their fellow-christians; especially when we are required to *stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ has now made us free, and not be entangled with yokes of bondage*; Gal. v. 1. What a strange medley of superstitious and ridiculous fooleries would be introduced into christian worship, if the elders or rulers in any ages of the church, might invent ceremonies at their pleasure, and impose them on the people? The church of Rome, by this means is become a theatre of Jewish and heathen pageantry, to the great dishonour of God, the reproach of christianity, and the hazard and ruin of the souls of men.

It will be replied here, but is not some power of rule and government still given to judges in a nation, and to magistrates in a city, notwithstanding the unhappy consequences which may arise from the abuse of this power. The abuse of authority does not prove there is no such authority: Even so in churches, the power may be abused; yet surely, there must be some persons who have power and authority, rule and government, lodged in their hands, even since the days of inspiration and extraordinary commission; for without it every society will run into great disorder and confusion. Pray what is this rule or power of government, which is granted to ordinary ministers in a christian church; and wherein does it consist, if not in appointing such things as Christ has left indifferent? To this I answer;

The rule and government which is committed to ordinary ministers in the church, so far as I can understand it, seems to consist in these things following; viz. in going before the people, and leading the several parts of their worship, and becoming their example in every duty; in teaching them the principles and rules of their religion; the knowledge, profession, and practice of those doctrines and duties, that worship and order, which reason and natural religion dictates, and that which Christ himself has revealed, superadded, and established in his word: It consists in exhorting, persuading, and charging the hearers with solemnity in the name and authority of Christ, to comply therewith; in instructing the people how to apply those general principles and rules to particular cases and occurrences, and giving them their best advice; in presiding in their assemblies, and particularly as to the admission and exclusion of members: It consists in watching over the flock; in guarding them against errors and dangers; in admonishing, and warning, and reproving, with all gravity and authority, those who neglect or oppose any of the rules of Christ. But I cannot find where our blessed Lord has given them any power, or pretence of power, to

impose on conscience any such advices of their own, which neither reason nor revelation approve; much less to impose any of their own inventions of new doctrines, or duties; or so much as their own peculiar explications of the words of Christ, by their own authority. When our Saviour gave commission to his disciples, or his apostles, to *preach the gospel to all nations*, it was in this manner: *Go teach them to observe*, not whatsoever you shall command, but, *whatsoever I have commanded you*; Mat. xxviii. 20.

It is granted indeed, the apostles had authority to explain the meaning of Christ to the churches by inspiration; but even they were not entrusted to invent any new doctrines or laws of their own, and impose them upon men.

And as these inspired persons have communicated to the churches all that Christ designed, we must rest there. And since Christ is the only Lord of his own Church, whose wisdom is infallible, and whose power and authority are unquestionable, it is very unreasonable to suppose that he should leave any part of the doctrines or duties of christianity to be invented, or imposed upon his churches, by men, whose best wisdom and knowledge are weak, and fallible, and uncertain; and their authority so doubtful and questionable, or rather so null and void, as to any inventions and impositions of their own.

Alas, what wretched work would such a supposed authority make in different churches, in the same age? What contentions, and endless confusions, would be raised among christians? What different and contrary opinions, and ceremonies, and forms of worship and practice, would be imposed on distinct churches, and all called by the christian name? Has not the whole church of Christ suffered infinite damage by these pretences? What mischiefs and strifes, and schisms, would arise in the same churches, by the different sentiments and injunctions of different elders or pastors in the same church? What eternal innovations in churches, as to their faith, worship, and practice, when pastors die successively, and others, of different principles, come in their room? Has not the world seen too much of this already, in every age of the church? Observe with what zeal St. Paul, the greatest of the apostles, exclaims against any such sort of power, even in himself and his fellow-teachers. *What is Paul, or what is Apollos, or what is Cephas, or Peter, but servants, or ministers, by whom ye were taught to believe the same gospel*, or the same religion and institutions of Christ; 1 Cor. i. 12. and iii. 5. We are far from being *lords of your faith: We are only the helpers of your joy*; 2 Cor. i. 24.

As for the lesser things, which Christ has commanded, and which are *necessary to be determined* some way or other in a *church, as in any human society*; such as the appointment of the

place and hour of meeting, the chusing a president, the method and order of their religious exercises, &c. These must be agreed, or at least consented to, by the society itself. A judge in a court, or a magistrate in a city, has no power to make any new law: His business is only to explain and apply in general the laws that are made according to the best of his understanding: And after all, it is a jury of twelve men, in our national courts of justice, that determines the affair with regard to particular things or persons. So ministers in the church are not lords or sovereigns in Christ's kingdom: They, in their highest character, can be supposed to be set up but as judges, to explain his laws, and apply them to rising occasions, and shew men how *to do all things decently and orderly*; 1 Cor. xii. 40. but in many cases of church affairs, it is the people that must actually apply them to particular persons or occurrences. Ministers have not any dominion given them, either over our faith or practice.

It may be observed also, that the names which are given to ministers in scripture, do not signify sovereign rule and authority: Their name is ministers, or servants, and they are never called lords, or commanders, but leaders, presidents, *stewards*, *shepherds*, *teachers*, *elders*, *overseers*, &c. all which intimate a limited authority, and not supreme power*.

But as many writers among the puritans and non-conformists have handled this matter abundantly in the last age, so the reverend and learned bishop Hoadley, in latter years, has happily laboured to guard this prerogative of Christ to make laws in his own church, from the usurpations of men; and therefore I insist no further on this particular.

Though the scripture be silent about the extent of the power of particular bishops or elders in a church, yet some may say, does not the light of nature teach us, that many grave and wise persons, the bishops and elders of many churches, meeting together in a synod, or solemn council, may join and make laws, or constitutions, for all the churches under their care? And are not the churches bound to obey? First, I answer:

I. It is granted, that the light of nature would lead the wisest persons sometimes to meet together for mutual advice and

* Governments is the strongest word of authority used to denote an office in the christian church, and that is but one: 1 Cor. xii. 28. And some learned men are of opinion, this name signifies deacons, whose government reached not to the faith or conscience, but they distributed and disposed of the money wisely, which the helps just before mentioned, that is, men of wealth and goodness, gave toward the support of the poor. See Mr. Chandler's Commentary on Joel, page 150. Or if these governments imply high authority and power, let it be remembered, it is only mentioned as an office in the days of inspiration, and is joined *with apostles, prophets*, evangelists, gifts of tongues, &c.

counsel; but I know not of any natural or scriptural right, that ministers, joined in a synod, have to make new laws for christian churches; nor have single christians or congregations any right or leave, much less any obligation, to subject themselves and their consciences to such a dominion of men, in things which neither scripture nor nature requires. It is the ready way, by degrees, to put other kings into the kingdom of Christ, who alone is sovereign in his church. It is a dangerous thing for christians to give up themselves to the will of fallible men by such a subjection; and they will find, by woeful experience, many things, by degrees, imposed upon them, that will neither suit with their conscience or their conveniency, with their own inclination, or their faithful subjection to Christ. What has been the event of this in all ages may justly be again expected, if the same experiment be made. I answer, secondly:

II. If this were once allowed, may not these ministers, thus met together in one nation, upon the same principle, depute some of their number to join with such sort of deputation of christian ministers in other nations, till at last they devolve all their power upon one small assembly or general council, or upon one single person, who may be deputed or appointed to determine for them all? If these sort of deputations carry any authentic power with them, to make laws for conscience, they may be carried on as far as an universal council, or a Pope, before they stop, and we are at Rome ere we are aware. You will reply perhaps, Is there not some encouragement given to the government of the church by assemblies, councils, convocations, or synods of bishops or elders, in that famous chapter; Acts xv. where they met about that great question, *Whether the heathen converts should be circumcised or no?*

But the answer to this is very easy: This was not a council of elders or bishops, for here are the brethren of the church at Jerusalem joined together with the apostles and elders; and besides, that assembly had so much of the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit of God in them, that they could justly pronounce, *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden;*——verses 22, 23, 25, 28. Now when persons divinely inspired, as those apostles and elders, and many of the brethren were, shall meet together for such a purpose, I have nothing to say against their determinations. But let ministers in their councils, in later ages, take heed how they assume lordship over conscience, till they are furnished with such gifts, and can make such a divine commission appear, as will warrant them to say, *It appeared good to the Holy Ghost and to us*, to appoint so and so. Perhaps it will be replied here, the apostles and inspired *persons knew what* was the christian's duty before, and

could have determined this question by their extraordinary gifts, without convening in a council or synod: but probably the providence of God so ordered it, that even inspired apostles should meet and debate this point in a synod, on purpose to teach all succeeding churches what is to be done in such a case, and to shew how their difficulties and controversies should be authoritatively determined by synods, even to the end of the world.

Answer I. And I have as much right to say, perhaps the apostles Peter and James, &c. did not know this matter so well before, and therefore could not have determined this question without convening in a council; for their divine revelations of many particular things were made to them not all at once, in the days of pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon them; but this was done by degrees, and at particular seasons, as the occasions of christianity and the churches required it. Peter did not know that he must preach the gospel to the heathens several years after that day of pentecost, when the Holy Spirit fell upon them in cloven tongues, till a vision from heaven taught it him, when *Cornelius was directed by an angel to send messengers to call him to Cæsarea.* And it is probable, God ordained this council to be called, not only to teach the church at Jerusalem, as well as the apostles, a full answer to the question in dispute, but to render the unanimous direction and appointment of so many inspired persons more public, more weighty, and efficacious, than the voice of a single apostle would have been in so important a case of controversy between the Jewish and Gentile converts.

Answer II. I will allow that providence, perhaps, might appoint this council of wise and knowing men at Jerusalem to be convened, to teach the following churches and ages what they should do in cases of doubt and difficulty; that is, that they should meet together, and advise with one another, and debate matters freely and sincerely, according to that great rule of human prudence which Solomon also teaches us: *In the multitude of counsellors there is safety;* Prov. xi. 14. And great deference should be paid to the advice of many aged, learned, and pious men, met in council. But if no inspired men are among them, they can only draw up their conclusion thus: *It seemed good to us,* fallible men, to give our opinion and advice so or so; but not to determine absolutely for other persons, and make rules to bind the consciences of others, unless they could add, *It seemed good to the Holy Spirit also, as well as unto us;* for if the vote of a council of fallible men could bind us, why should not the council of Trent, or any other councils, bind us to all their antichristian decrees? The best constituted church or council may in time grow degenerate, and if they have such authority given

them, they may make heathenish or hellish decrees, and bind them on the consciences of men.

Answer III. And yet further, in the third place, I add, if this decree at Jerusalem had not been the direction and determination of the Holy Spirit, by the lips of inspired men, why should the churches at Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia; Acts xv. 23. submit to a vote or opinion of the church at Jerusalem, any more than the church at Jerusalem should submit to an opinion of the church at Corinth, or Rome, or Antioch? What was done at Jerusalem by inspired men once, on an extraordinary occasion, cannot be made a binding example or rule, for the determination of conscience in all following times, and in ordinary church-affairs, where no inspired persons are present; for by this precedent, one church would have power given it to determine for another; which I know no church pretends to, but that of Rome.

And finally, It is plain, if this scripture give authority to uninspired men in ordinary cases, it gives this dominion to the whole church at Jerusalem, not to the bishops or elders only; for this was not a council made up of the elders, bishops or representatives of the churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Syria, and Cilicia, but of the apostles, elders, and brethren of the church at Jerusalem; and yet they authoritatively determined the case for the churches of the Gentiles, which they should never have done, if there had been no apostles or inspired persons there. Whatsoever therefore the church at Jerusalem determined as a duty for the Gentile churches to practise in a dubious case, because it had apostles, and many inspired persons in it, can be no sufficient authority for synods, convocations, or councils of bishops, or elders of modern churches, to determine other dubious cases, for their own or other congregations, and bind their consciences to any point of faith or practice merely by their authority, when they have no inspired persons among them. But I only glance at these things, and will not enter into a debate about them at present.

VI. Though baptism and the Lord's-supper are ceremonies of divine institution, yet is not the New Testament in a great measure silent as to the persons who shall celebrate them?

I answer, the scripture acquaints us, that the commission *to baptize* was plainly given here to those who were appointed *to teach the nations;* Mat. xxviii. 20. And the light of nature shews us, that those persons who are furnished with talents, and chosen, and called, and solemnly appointed to preach the gospel to men, to offer up their prayers and praises to God, and to lead the worship in churches, are certainly in the nature of things, the most proper persons to administer or celebrate such rites or ordinances, as should be attended with the word and prayer;

for *by the word and prayer is every thing sanctified* to its proper purposes in the kingdom of Christ; 1 Tim. iv. 5. And yet, if no ministers, elders, or bishops, are near at hand, nor the ministrations of any such are to be obtained, without sinful compliances, perhaps it may be better that some private member of that congregation, if sufficiently furnished with proper gifts, should be deputed or desired by the church, to perform these solemnities once or twice, than that these institutions of Christ, which are so plain and express, should be omitted for a long time together, merely on account of doubtful disputables. Christ has most expressly commanded this duty; but who shall administer this ordinance, and how ministers should be ordained, is much more obscure. If a congregation want a regular minister, yet the church should assemble for prayer; and exhortation or teaching, by reading or preaching, should not be utterly neglected: Why then should they neglect the Lord's-supper? If a neighbouring minister cannot conveniently be obtained, may not a brother of the congregation, who has competent abilities, be desired to pray, or to read a sermon, or to exhort, rather than the church be without any public worship, or spend their Lord's-day at home, and that for weeks or months together, for a considerable time? And may not a person thus qualified, if no minister be within reach, be deputed or called by the church, to break bread to them; rather than live without obeying the express commands of a dying Saviour.

Now I have ventured so far in giving my opinion here, I may the more confidently add, that this should not be practised on every little common occasion, lest great inconveniences arise thereby: And for this reason, every destitute church should furnish themselves, as soon as may be, with a pastor or minister of their own, to go before them, and in a regular manner, celebrate these divine rites of christianity, which ought not to be long neglected. Some other cases might be mentioned, which may fall out in a christian church, wherein we can find no plain direction or example in scripture; and then reason and prudence must direct us: Where revelation is silent, reason is our guide.

SECT. VI.—*Christian Churches formed like Civil Societies, upon the plain Nature and Reason of Things.*

Permit me here to give a little specimen, by way of similitude, how naturally a christian church is formed, when we suppose there are several christians within the reach and knowledge of one another, in this sinful world. It is raised in the same manner as any other civil society may be formed among men, especially among several natives of one country meeting together in a foreign land: And while I am representing their procedure,

you may carry your thoughts of the formation and constitution of a christian church along with you in the simile, and apply it all the way. Suppose three or four Englishmen, who have their residence in a city of China, happen to meet one another, and by conversation, finding that they speak the same language, they make it known to each other, that they are natives of the same country; they all profess allegiance to the same king, George the Second; and though they sojourn for a season in a foreign land, and are engaged in many secular affairs there, yet they declare their resolution to behave as becomes Englishmen, while they are waiting for a call from their sovereign to return home. They hereupon agree to meet once a week, in order to converse about the affairs of their own nation, to learn some tidings from it, to pay some special honours to their absent king, to learn further notices of his will, and to prepare for their return homeward. The day which they appoint for their assembly, is the day of the accession of their king to the throne, in its weekly return: The place is also agreed among them, such as may be convenient for their frequent attendance.

Other Englishmen, who are in that city, hearing of this society, come to their assembly, one after another, and desire acquaintance with their countrymen and brethren: They make it appear, that they are natives of the same land, that they own the same sovereign, that they are doing his will, and preparing to return home at his orders: And, in the mean time, they desire the privilege of being admitted into their society. Upon such a profession, and by the approbation of the society, they are received into this English fellowship with pleasure.

Now it is not be supposed, that every one of them is capable of taking proper care of the best interests of this society, nor of speaking in an instructive and profitable manner concerning the things that relate to their native country, their laws, and rules of conduct; their king, and their common design of a return. They agree therefore to chuse one person amongst them, who shall devote himself to this work, shall study the laws of their country, the rules of the proper behaviour of Englishmen, and the mind and will of their king: One who shall present their common allegiance to their sovereign, in frequent addresses sent to England, and shall spend a hour or two every week, in setting before them what honours they owe to the king of England, what are the blessings of their native home, what are their duties in a foreign land, what dangers they are exposed to among the heathen Chinese, and how they may best avoid them; what are the enjoyments they expect at their return, and the best methods of preparation for it. This man accepts the office, and by a solemn vow of allegiance to the king, and faithfulness to his countrymen in this trust, he enters upon his office.

Besides this, once in a month, suppose they meet together, according to an appointment of their prince, to eat a morsel of bread, and drink a glass of wine together, in memory of some great benefit which the whole nation of England received by a difficult and bloody enterprize of the king's son, when in former years, he took a voyage from England to China; and they keep up this feast in honour to his name, wherein the provisions, after a short speech, are distributed to every member of the society, by the person whom they have appointed to instruct them in English affairs. Now because this man spends a great part of his time in letters, or dispatches to England, and in the study of English affairs, that he may the better entertain the assembly of his brethren at their solemn weekly meetings, the community agree to release him from the secular businesses of life, and join their liberality to maintain him with honour. But here let it be observed, that though they pay so much respect to the person whom they chuse to be their instructor, and to go before them in the honours due to their king, yet they do not entrust him to invent any new ceremony to testify their allegiance, nor to impose on them any new law or custom, but what he can find prescribed among the laws of their nation, and appointments of the king, or of his ambassadors to China. In these matters indeed, he may require obedience in the name of their king; but in all other things he must act according to the agreement or opinion of the society; which must be testified by the vote of the major part.

Among this community, some happen to be aged, or sick, or disabled for work; or they are fallen into poverty, and their circumstances are sunk in the world, notwithstanding their diligence and labour: These are not capable of maintaining themselves; the society therefore chearfully contribute toward their support: And they entrust two or three persons with this money, and desire them to take care that the table of the poor be supplied. They entrust also with these persons what money they collect for the honourable maintenance of their teacher; and desire them to take care, that every thing necessary toward their weekly meetings at a certain time, and at a convenient place, be provided at their public charge. They go on in this manner with much comfort and mutual assistance, in every thing that relates to their welfare in a foreign land; and rejoice in their hope to meet one day in England. And as they are ever adding to their society by admitting new members, upon their credible profession and appearance to be true Britons, in the room of such as are yearly called home; so if any among them prove to be false and insincere, and are guilty of crimes highly disgraceful to their profession of being natives of England, and their allegiance to their king, they have no other punishment for them besides that they are cut off from the society, and forbid to enjoy the privileges thereof any longer.

Now it is so very easy to apply these transactions of Englishmen in China to the affairs of a christian church, that I hardly need display the parallel. Christians profess to be natives of heaven, to be born from above: They sojourn for a season in the world as in a foreign land, till their Father and King summon them home. They speak the language of the gospel, or of the kingdom of heaven, and understand it; and they know each other hereby: They agree to meet together to worship their king, and pay allegiance to him; to learn more of his will, and seek his favour. The day of their solemn assemblies is the day of the resurrection of Christ, the Son of God, and their Lord. When they do special honours to him, they eat bread and drink wine, to solemnize the memory of their deliverance from sin and hell, when he was sent into the world to die for them. Then, by calling away their hearts from this world, and conversing about heavenly things, they are continually preparing for their return home. They chuse one or more teachers, pastors, or bishops, to instruct them in their duty, and to offer up their common addresses to God, in the name of Christ; to put them in mind of the things of heaven, and to walk before them in exemplary holiness. They chuse deacons to relieve the poor, out of their public liberality, as well as to take care that their pastors or teachers be maintained. They receive in new members who are worthy, upon their profession; and they cast out those that are dishonourable. They walk onward in this way toward the heavenly state; and wait the summons from on high, to call them thither by death and the resurrection.

SECT. VII.—*The several Advantages of such a Church, or Christian Society.*

So natural a scheme of social religion as this, does not need long and express forms of institution, after the great doctrines and duties of the christian faith and life are plainly revealed and received. All that is found in the New Testament relating to christian churches, so happily corresponds with these dictates of the light of nature, and the affairs of the civil life, that it has made these rules much more plain, and easy, and practicable, than those of the Jewish religion, or perhaps of any other religion, that pretends to divine revelation. This scheme is built on the eternal reasons and relations of things, as well as the word of God. The particular positive prescriptions relating to christian churches are but few, while the general duties of christian fellowship are such as the light of nature and reason seem to dictate to all societies whatsoever. It is the evil mixture of the needless and fanciful inventions of men, together with the plain and common dictates of nature and scripture, and the impositions of these inventions on conscience, which hath done so much injury to christianity, defaced its beauty, and tarnished its honours.

II. This scheme is perfectly consistent with every form and kind of civil government, whether it be a kingdom, a senate, or a republic. As it does not mingle itself with the interests of this world, nor assume to itself any civil or coercive power, so it can make no head against the governors of the country; for its power is of another kind, and reaches but to one single society of christians: Nor are they combined by any law of Christ, in such united multitudes, under one common visible head, as to make themselves dangerous to any state. Whatsoever hath been done in the world by men professing christianity, in a way of resistance to lawful governors, or rebellions against them, hath never been done by them as churches of Christ formed upon the model I have laid down.

III. This form of a christian church allows to all its members the most perfect liberty of men and christians. It is inconsistent with persecution for conscience sake; for it leaves all civil rewards and preferments, penalties and punishments, to kingdoms, and states, and the governors of this world. It pretends to no power over conscience, to compel men to obedience; no prisons, no axes, fire, nor sword. It gives its ministers power and authority to command nothing but what is found in the bible: All other things must be determined by the consent of the people, who are supposed to be led by common prudence, by the necessary reason of things, and by a vote of the major part of the society. But if in any of these things, particular persons, after all proper enquiries, cannot agree with the major part, they may make their remonstrances, and be dismissed, if they cannot continue there with tolerable satisfaction; or they may withdraw to another congregation, if they are aggrieved, and the society refuse to dismiss them. I confess, those christians who differ from the major part of the congregation should seriously examine themselves, whether their disagreement doth not arise from any pique, or prejudice, or worldly interest, or humour, or obstinate self-will; and, in some particulars, they should deny themselves, rather then divide themselves, from a society whose communion they have long enjoyed: More especially, they should take heed of this in the country, where they have not conveniency of holding communion with other christian societies. And even where they have such opportunities and conveniences, persons should not indulge a fickle humour, nor run wandering about from place to place, and fluttering from one church to another, upon every little difference. But after all, it must be acknowledged, there may be several just and reasonable grounds for particular christians to separate from a society, from which they differ in some sentiments or transactions, though they still continue to acknowledge them to be a true church of Christ. Such a liberty as this must be still maintained; for christian churches must have all voluntary members, and not be turned into prisons.

If any person sins so grossly against the plain rules of the gospel, or the laws of God or Christ, as to appear to renounce the characters of a christian, the church hath power only to renounce such a person, and disclaim all christian fellowship with him, and turn him into the world, which is the kingdom of Satan, till he repent: But they have no authority to hurt his life or limbs; to touch a hair of his head, nor a penny of his money, by way of punishment.

IV. By such sort of churches as these, christianity is more easily maintained in single and secret assemblies, if the powers of this world favour them not; for there is no need of large multitudes assembling together for any ordinances of worship, or for discipline; no need of any such public appearances or transactions, as may give any unnecessary umbrage or suspicion to persecuting enemies: There is no need of councils and synods of ministers of distant cities, to meet together to make laws for the church, or to rectify disorders there: Nor is there any need to travel over large counties or dioceses, to fetch a rightful ordination of a minister for any church: much less to take a journey to Rome, if all the ministers in a nation were dead, or departed from the faith. If the whole society, which was wont to meet together, cannot do it under a persecuting prince, for fear of exposing themselves to public injury, they may assemble in smaller parties, and their preachers may teach, and pray, and administer all ordinances among them, as it was often done in the primitive times, maintaining their christian fellowship by secret meetings: and they may all be called little churches, in the house. By such single congregations, larger or smaller, was the whole church of Christ in the world continued and increased, the first two or three hundred years, whensoever the powers of this world took it into their heads to persecute and destroy the professors of the christian faith.

Perhaps it may be objected here, would it not be a much more substantial and powerful way of maintaining christian churches, if these single congregations, by virtue of their ministers or elders, were combined together in some sacred bond of union, that might make a considerable body of people under such heads or leaders, or under one supreme head, who might better defend them against the invasion of their rites by any secular powers or persecuting princes?

To this I answer, that churches of Christ considered as such, have no secular power in themselves, nor authority to make any efforts against secular powers: But when men become christians, or members of churches, they do not divest themselves of any secular or civil rights or powers which they had before: And therefore when natural or civil liberties are unjustly and cruelly *invaded by any of the men of* this world, they by the laws of

nature have a just right, as men, to defend themselves; and no ecclesiastical combinations can give them any further right or power than what they have as men: And this belongs to them still, whatsoever religion they profess, whether natural or revealed, whether pagan, mohemetan, or christian. A professor of every religion has a right to be protected by the government as long as he maintains his allegiance to the governors, and does no injury to the state. But if governors will not protect him, but will give him up to the fury of persecutors, he has certainly a civil right to defend himself and his friends against all assaults and injuries.

V. Miscarriages in the government, or conduct of such a church as I have described, are less dangerous to christianity; because they affect but one single congregation, they reach but to one society. Those ecclesiastical governments which include vast numbers and multitudes combined under one or more spiritual heads or rulers, if there be any misrule and confusion brought in among them, it involves multitudes in the mischief of it, and sometimes, shakes or destroys whole nations. But if a government which is included within one single congregation be never so much divided by contentions, and fall into the greatest confusions, the mischief is not of so large an extent, nor can it have so fatal and dreadful consequences. If the congregation itself should be actually dissolved by these constitutions, the particular members of it may depart and join themselves to other congregations within their reach or neighbourhood, who are nearest of their own opinion, and walk with them in a religious and peaceful fellowship, which they could not well do before, because of such different opinions and divided spirits.

VI. Such single societies or churches so constituted are most happily suited to maintain and carry on the great purposes, and designs of the gospel, for the conversion of sinners, and the edification of true christians. Of this matter see the learned Doctor Owen's Enquiry into the Original of Churches, chapter vi. page 119. See also Sermons at Berry-street, sermon xlix. Upon the whole, whensoever it shall appear that any other form of a christian church is more happily suited to the edification and peace of christians, to the preservation of christian liberty, and to secure the spiritual honours which belong to Christ in his churches, and at the same time appears to have more countenance from the New Testament than this, I shall be glad to relinquish this set of sentiments, and with pleasure exchange it for a better. That is certainly the best form of a christian church, whereby truth, peace, and holiness may be most happily promoted and secured.

ECT. VIII.—*Of the Power of Churches to appoint Holy Things or Actions.*

Question.—Whether a christian church may not appoint or etermine circumstances and ceremonies of worship and order, hich are left undetermined in the New Testament, and require em to be observed?

Answer.—In the primitive churches there were extraordi-ry gifts and powers communicated to them: There were *ostles, evangelists,* and inspired leaders and guides; but since ese extraordinary gifts and powers are ceased, reason and scrip-re are our only rules. It is upon this foot every christian urch, or every single society of christians, *receiving one another the Lord,* as St. Paul speaks, Rom. xvi. 2. that is, agreeing worship and walk together according to the faith and order of e gospel, when it is furnished with its proper officers, that is, a shop, or bishops and deacons is the highest ecclesiastical power at I know of in this world, which has plain evidence and sup-rt in the word of God, or the necessary reason of things. et I cannot find that either the light of reason or scripture has ven such a church, or its officers, any authority to invent and e, to appoint and command new ceremonies of divine worship any case: Nor has it a right to impose on the consciences of en any such self-invented modes or circumstances of worship, as to make them holy things, or to oblige any single christian comply therewith. But to speak a little more particularly to is matter. We must distinguish between the religious cere-onies of worship, and the mere natural circumstances of the rformance of it.

Natural circumstances are such as are necessary, or at least ghly expedient, for the performance of acts of worship, consi-red merely as natural actions, and abstracted from their religi-s design. Such are time, place, habit, gesture, &c. for no tural action can be put forth but it must be in some time, or some place, in some posture of body: nor can any transaction public society be conveniently performed without some sort of ments, without a commodious place and seasonable hours for embling: These in their own nature are properly no parts of rship or religion, but circumstances belonging to those actions sidered merely as natural, and as the actions of natural and iable creatures. Among these natural circumstances of actions social worship, some are necessary to be determined one certain y, and others are not so. The circumstances necessary to be termined one certain way, are the time and place, the lan-age, and something of the manner or order of the religious ions, &c.

Now where these *are not determined* by God himself, it is *nted they must be determined by* every worshipping society

for themselves; for they must agree what hour to meet togethe what place to meet in, what language* shall be used in the wo ship, whether they shall begin or end the worship with the Lord supper, or with a psalm or song, who shall minister in ho things; whether there shall be any responses of the congreg tion to the words of him that officiates in prayer, or whether *am* shall be pronounced aloud, or whether a silent assent be sufficie Where God hath not determined these things, I do not find th he hath ever given authority to any person to determine these f other persons, or any society of men to determine them for oth societies; but they must be determined by an agreement or vo of every society for itself. As in several of these things the must be a concurrence or agreement to make any solemn a constant meetings and transactions of a civil society, peaceful a useful, regular and orderly, so are the same things needful to agreed upon in a christian church to render the worship of eve single society practicable and edifying, harmonious, agreeab and decent.

And since these things are necessary to be determined o way, if some few persons in the society will not consent to t agreement of the major part of them, they must depart and jo themselves to some other society which is more for their conv niency. Such are the various tempers, engagements, sentimen inclinations and conveniences of different persons, that the would be a great bar put upon the frequent meetings of any lar society for any civil or religious purposes, if they must not, me and transact any affairs till every single person be perfect pleased. If therefore the minor part cannot, or will not conse to what the bulk of the society agree upon, here is no impositi upon their consciences, while they are allowed to join themselv with other societies, civil or religious, where these necessary a disputed circumstances are agreed and practised more accordi to their mind.

The circumstances which are not necessary to be determin one way, are the postures or gestures of the body, the garmen of the preacher, or of him that prays, of singers or hearers, & and these every person may determine for himself: Some m have a blue garment, while others have red or brown, black white; some may wear a long coat, others a short one; so may stand in prayer, others kneel if they will; some may chu to stand in singing or preaching, while others may chuse to sit the same society. I must confess there seems to be something a natural decency in the uniformity of some of these circu

* Always excepting those primitive times, when various languages were u as an extraordinary confirmation of the gospel of Christ. But in ordin seasons of worship the assembly must know and agree beforehand, that it m be performed in a language which they understand.

stances, especially that of gesture, in one and the same congregation, in some particular parts of worship, as standing in prayer, &c. but no such necessity of such a uniformity as to give power to any person or society to determine for every single worshipper, and oblige him to obey. If any whole church, or a multitude of churches in a nation will chuse to agree in any particular practice, it is well; or if they can persuade every person to consent to the same: But if some persons will presume to determine all these circumstances one way, and will impose them upon their fellow-christians by a pretended authority, they go beyond the bounds that either the light of nature or scripture allows, and assume such a power over the consciences of men as I cannot find the chapter and verse where it was given them; for these circumstances being left indifferent in themselves, the nature of things, and in scripture, they are not necessary to be determined one way for a whole society, and much less should all this society be obliged in conscience to comply with such an imposition.

Having given such an account of the natural circumstances of social worship, let us enquire what are religious ceremonies.

Religious ceremonies are either real actions, or modes and circumstances of action by which some special honour is designed to be paid to God, and therefore God alone can institute them, who alone can determine what shall be honourable to himself. These have generally a signification of something inward and invisible annexed to them: But whether we can learn what they signify or no, still there is a holiness and a necessity placed in them by the divine appointment; and therefore man cannot appoint them, nor add to them, because he cannot put holiness into any thing, nor make any thing holy or sinful, which God has not made so. Some of these religious ceremonies are real actions, and entirely divine institutions of sacred appointments of service, which are in no wise necessary to natural actions, nor should ever have been practised, if God had not positively enjoined them: Others in their abstracted nature antecedent to the divine command, were but mere natural circumstances of action; yet when thus determined particularly by God, they become as it were parts of our religion, and our worship.

Circumcision, offering of sacrifices, slaying and eating the passover, burning of incense, lighting the lamps, sprinkling of blood, divers washings, the use of the *instruments of music in the temple*, &c. seem to be the first sort, viz. such real religious actions and ceremonies of pure divine institution, as were by divine appointment imposed upon the ancient church. Others are of the second sort, among which may be reckoned the places or spots of ground, perhaps where the tabernacle and temple stood, the holy times, such as *sabbaths, new moons*, and other festivals, the attire or vesture of the priests who officiate, &c. These were

but modes and circumstances of action made necessary to t Jewish worshippers, ordained to be holy, and converted into rel gious ceremonies.

Under the New Testament the ceremonies distinct from n tural religion, whether real actions or mere modes and circu stances of action, are few and easy, such as *the washing wi water and baptism, and eating bread and wine at the supper of t Lord*, to which we may add the observation of *the first day of t week* in memory of our risen Saviour. Any of the circumstanc or modes of action which belong to these religious rites, whi are not determined by scripture, and are not necessary to be d termined one way in order to social worship, must be left indiffe ent to every worshipper, according as his conscience or his co veniency shall direct. I know not any text where God has giv any man, or set of men, any power to impose on others. S these things happily set forth at large in Doctor Calamy's exc lent discourse, called an "Introduction to the Second Part Moderate Non-conformity;" of which I am informed, that M Locke himself should say upon the perusal of it, that while t protestant dissenters kept close to these principles, they wou sufficiently maintain their ground, and justify their separati from any established national church, if that church shou assume an authority to impose things which ought to be left i different.

Surely the fourteenth chapter of the Romans lays a fou dation for this christian liberty, and forbids to impose on conscie the observation of *meats or days*, and in general all impositic of this kind. The apostle, while he handles this subject, had order to impose or forbid these practices on the Romans, to wh he wrote. He leaves every man to use his own *liberty in gospel, nor to be entangled with any fresh yokes of bondag* Gal. v. 1. supposing always that the light of nature and comm reason will keep all sober christians within the bounds of hum decency, common prudence, and civility; and that a preferer be given to such modes, and gestures, and seasons, which se to be patronized by the examples mentioned in scripture.

The custom also of the holiest and purest churches may ha some influence to direct our practice, in such affairs of small i portance where we cannot find any other rule of determinatic either from the light of nature or scripture. The apostle P seems to give this advice to the Corinthians in the business wearing the hair long or short; 1 Cor. xi. 14, 15. For after had offered some reason on one side from the mere light of natu and decency, he adds, verse 16. *that if any man seem to be co tentious*, that is, be not satisfied with my arguments, and pers in contending about this matter, *we have no such customs, nor t churches of God:* That is, let him be determined by the custo

of us the apostles, and of other christian churches; let him not affect a singularity in things of less moment, nor give offence to the generality of the most serious and pious professors of the same faith in such little things as these are.

But if any man, or any society of men, shall assume so much to themselves, as to pretend a divine authority to confine other churches and christians to a most exquisite uniformity in every punctilio that relates to religion and circumstances of worship, even in things which God has not appointed, they throw us back again into a sort of Judaism, and make and impose new yokes of bondage; they pretend to bind what Christ has made free, and seem to usurp his prerogative: A pretence to such power appears to me to be the very spring and spirit of anti-christianism; there is the foundation for papacy laid, though it has not arisen yet to an universal supremacy, to an infallible chair, and a triple crown.

All christians are bound by the New Testament to worship one God, even God the Father who dwells in heaven, in the name of one Mediator, Jesus Christ, by the aids or operations of one Spirit, they are bound to be baptized into these names, and to remember the death of Christ in the holy supper, to trust in the promises of the gospel, and to practise the precepts of it in an uniform life of holiness. This is evident and certain, and perhaps this may be thought almost sufficient to maintain the unity of the christian church. But still let it be observed, that where christians are fallen into very different opinions in any important matters of doctrine or duty, or where their sentiments are so extremely divided, and perhaps contrary to each other in matters of worship and order, that they cannot agree and join in the same forms and modes of divine service, or where they have not charity enough to bear with each other's differences in things of less moment, they ought not to force themselves, nor to be forced into one society or church; but they should join themselves to such distinct societies as are nearest of their own mind; for their edification in faith, holiness and love, is one great and chief end of church-fellowship.

Though the men of Israel were bound by law to join *three times a year* to worship God who dwelt in the temple or tabernacle by the appointed sacrifices of the passover, pentecost, &c. yet they were not bound by any law of God to attend that synagogue which was nearest to their own dwelling, where prayer and praise was performed, and instructions and exhortations given to the people. Herein they had, or they should have had, liberty to chuse their fellow-worshippers and the synagogue where they would worship, if they had any scruple upon their consciences about the practice of that which was nearest to them. And the same liberty belongs to christians in every age and nation.

To force all christians into the same church, whose understandings and opinions point different ways, and to bind them together in an outward form of fellowship with their minds so much divided, is the way to increase their differences, to kindle their fire with more fierceness, and awaken their wrath to a higher degree, till they grow mad against each other and ruin the church. It is like tying Sampson's *foxes together by the tail with firebrands between them*, while their heads stand contrary ways, and then inclosing them all with a strong fence in one field: There they will unavoidably snarl and rage against one another; they will draw different ways, and diffuse their fire and wrath till they have burnt up the field, and destroyed a lovely harvest.

THE

TERMS OF CHRISTIAN COMMUNION,

Humbly proposed to the Churches of Christ, with an Attempt towards the Solution of various Questions and Cases of Conscience, arising from the Subject.

QUESTION I.—*What is Christian Communion? And what are the general and agreed Terms of it?*

CHRISTIAN communion in the sense of scripture, is the communion or *fellowship which christians have with God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ*, or with one another; and both are joined together by the apostle John; 1 John i. 3. *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship*, or communion *with us; and truly our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.*

This communion or fellowship in the spiritual and invisible part of it consists in a participation of the favour of God, the spiritual benefits of Christ, and the invisible and everlasting blessings of the gospel. But this is not our present subject of discourse. The visible fellowship or communion that christians have with each other, consists chiefly in the participation of the spiritual ordinances of the gospel, and mutual assistances for the good of each other.

"The special ordinances of the gospel are chiefly these two, *baptism and the Lord's-supper.*" Baptism is an ordinance appointed by Christ, for our entrance into the visible church; and when once performed is never to be repeated. The Lord's supper is an ordinance appointed by Christ after we are entered into the church, for the assistance and increase of our faith and hope, our comfort and holiness; and ought to be as often repeated

n christians have proper opportunity: It represents our communion with the Lord Jesus Christ in his death, and the benefits which are derived from it, such as the pardon of sin through his sacrifice of atonement, &c. and it represents also our communion with one another in those benefits, or our joint participation thereof, according to the apostle's description of it; 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. *The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? We are all partakers of that one bread.*

The other parts, privileges, or offices of christian communion, shall be mentioned, when there is need of it, in distinguishing constant and occasional communion. Now among all the ordinances of worship it is in our partaking of these two, viz. *baptism and the Lord's-supper*, that special christian communion chiefly consists. But when we use the words christian communion, we have most frequently a regard to *the Lord's-supper*, because our communion with one another, and joint participation of the blessings of the gospel, is most plainly represented thereby; and by the frequent repetition of it, our christian communion or holy fellowship is maintained in a more explicit and honourable manner. Having considered briefly the nature of christian communion, we must enquire now into the general terms of it.

As in order to hold an inward and spiritual communion with Christ and his people, we must be sincere believers, or real christians; so every person seeking visible communion with the church of Christ should satisfy his own conscience with nothing short of real christianity: But christians and churches not being able to search the heart as Christ and conscience can, the term of our visible communion with christians is a credible profession of real christianity, or *a professed subjection to the gospel of Christ*, as the apostle expresses it; 2 Cor. ix. 13. that is, such an outward profession of inward and hearty christianity, as gives just and credible evidence that this profession is sincere, and that the person thus professing is a hearty christian; Rom. x. 9, 10. *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thy heart, that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* If a man profess christianity in any manner or form of profession soever, and yet make it plainly and openly appear by other parts of his conduct, that his profession is not sincere and hearty, he has no right to salvation according to this text, and has always been deemed unworthy of christian communion in all the scripture history, and in the best and purest ages of the church. Those that *profess they know God, but in works deny him*, are to be counted *abominable* among all christians; Tit. i. 16.

It is not therefore real and inward christianity in the heart that can give any man a right to communion in outward ordi-

nances, unless it be professed in a credible manner to the worl nor can the want of such real and inward religion exclude a person from communion while he makes such a credible pr fession, for God only is the judge of hearts, and not man, must act according to outward appearances: There will be hyp crites in the church of Christ in this world, and there is no h for it: The wheat and tares *will grow together* in the same fi *till the time of harvest;* Mat. xiii. 30. The day of judgment the only time to decide the matter completely, and distingu hypocrites for ever from real christians; and therefore all t have the credible form and appearance of christianity, must admitted into the Church of Christ on earth. This is the co mon sentiment and practice of all the reformed churches, " t a credible profession is the general term of communion," thou they differ about some particular circumstances of this profess that go to make up the credibility of it. These things are generally acknowledged by the most and best of writers of day, that I shall not stay here to prove them, and my busines this discourse is with those christians that allow and acknowle what I have already said.

Now a credible profession of christianity implies these t things: First, that the matter professed be of such a nature, declared in such a manner, as may render the profession credib and, secondly, there must also be some person or persons to wh that profession must appear credible, and who must be judge the credibility of it. I shall begin with the last of these and c patch it soon, because I mention it only as a needful introduct to the chief questions relating to the particular terms of christ communion.

QUEST. II.—*Who are the proper Judges of the Credibility our Profession?*

Sect I. Jesus Christ in his word is the supreme Judge what is truth, and what is duty; what sort of persons ought to admitted to christian communion, and who should be forb But as he is absent from us, and speaks not but by his word, a his word does not apply its own rules to particular persons, Jo Thomas, William, &c. in every age and nation there is a cessity that some persons must judge and determine whet John, Thomas, William, &c. have these characters of wor communicants, which Christ has appointed in his word.

Every man for himself must use his own best judgment searching his heart, and trying himself by the word of G whether he has complied with the terms of salvation, and must judge for himself too whether it be his duty to pro himself to christian communion: But no man must determine

himself whether he shall be received to communion with others, and partake of their sacreds. No man can impose himself upon a church, merely because he thinks himself qualified: This would lay all the garden of Christ waste again, throw down all the fences, and reduce it to a mere wilderness: This supposition is too wild to be admitted.

If therefore a credible profession of christianity be the term of communion appointed by Christ in his word, there must be some present and living judges of the credibility of this profession; and I know not who can be so proper to judge as those persons with whom communion is desired. This is not a matter transacted merely between a minister and a single christian, for the Lord's-supper is not to be administered but in a community, as 1 Cor. xi. 20, 21, 33. *The church must come together to one place, and they must tarry for one another.* There must be therefore the consent of the community or society, to admit a person to share in and partake of the sacred things in communion with them. This ordinance of Christ represents the communion of his members *in one body, by the one bread, and one cup;* 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. And the duties of church-fellowship, to which we then engage ourselves, are mutual duties between a community or society of christians, therefore there must be a consent on both sides; and as a person must judge concerning the society, whether he will join himself to them, so the society must judge concerning him, whether they think him fit to be received as one of them. It is into union with that society that the person proposing himself is to be admitted, either in a constant or occasional way; and they give him the leave and privilege of becoming a partner with them, or a member of their body; and surely the light of nature tells us, that every voluntary society must judge who shall be members of their society, and enjoy fellowship with them in their peculiar privileges.

It must be confessed indeed, that where this voluntary society professes a subjection to the will and law of any sovereign or superior power, and this sovereign has given them a rule whereby they are bound to admit persons into their society, in this case, their own mere arbitrary will and pleasure cannot violate or neglect this rule without guilt; nor can they appoint any new rules and make them necessary terms and conditions of such admission: And this is the case of all christian churches. For though they are so many voluntary societies, yet Christ their common Lord and sovereign has appointed the general rule of admitting members into his churches, viz. that "all such shall be admitted who make a credible profession of christianity."

But wheresoever there is such a superior acknowledged rule given to direct in this affair, still the society itself must judge *concerning the true sense and just* application of this rule to

particular cases. It is this society that will suffer reproach, and bear the trouble of it, if a person admitted, prove scandalous and unworthy; and it is but reasonable therefore that they should determine whether he be a person fit and worthy to come among them or no; but still according to the rules of Christ, so far as they can understand his meaning. And as this is the voice and language of common reason, so it is also the appointment of Christ in his word, and this was the practice of the primitive times, as I shall shew hereafter. The society ought surely to have the same liberty which the proposed person has, and if he has liberty to judge whether he should seek communion with them, they ought to have liberty to judge whether they should receive him. Each has a right to judge of the sense and application of the rules of scripture to direct their own actions.

Now since there can be no regular or proper christian communion held and maintained but in and with a church of Christ, we must enquire into the nature of the christian church to find out which are the persons in, or of this church, that must judge and declare others fit for communion with it.

Sect. II.—The church of Christ is either visible or invisible. The invisible church includes all the real saints that are in heaven or on earth. But our question has not to do with the church in this sense. The whole visible church of Christ upon earth, consists of all those persons in the world that make a visible and credible profession of the christian religion, however scattered through all nations, and whether joined together by mutual agreement in particular societies, or not. The New Testament sometimes useth the word church in this sense; Mat. xvi. 18. 1 Cor. xii. 28. and other places; and it is in this sense when a person is baptized, he is said to be received into the christian church, for hereby he becomes a member of the catholic church visible on earth.

But all this vast scattered multitude can never maintain and perform acts of christian communion together in the Lord's-supper, which is the other chief ordinance of special communion: Nor indeed can they keep up the public honour of God, a public profession of the name of Christ, nor the duties of public worship, without their being divided into particular societies, which agree at stated times and seasons *to come together to one place*, as the apostle expresses it, for purposes of christian worship; 1 Cor. xi. 18, 20. and xiv. 23.

Such "a society or congregation of persons, both men and women, making a credible profession of christianity, and united by mutual agreement or consent to meet together usually at the same time and place for the performance of christian worship," is a church of Christ; and this is the clearest and plainest notion *that I can frame* of a particular church of Christ, according to

the language of the holy scripture, consult the book of Acts, consult the sacred epistles, where the word church is used at least forty or fifty times in this sense.

I will not deny but the word church, even where it does not signify the catholic church, visible or invisible, may in some few places be used for a larger number of christians than could meet in one place, as the church of Jerusalem in the very beginning of christianity, while christians multiplied faster than they could be well formed into regular distinct societies; yet even in some of those places perhaps it includes no more than did meet for some special purpose. See Acts xi. 22. and xv. 22. The word church may also in a few other places be used for a smaller collection of christians, that might occasionally meet, or perhaps dwell together, as *the church in the house of Aquilla and Priscilla;* 1 Cor. xvi. 19. and in the house of Philemon; Philem. verse 2. But the most common acceptation of the word church, where it signifies a visible company of christians, implies such a number, as met usually by common consent in one place for christian communion, in stated and solemn ordinances of worship, and especially the Lord's-supper, as in the forecited texts of the epistle to the Corinthians and many others. This is the church that is described in the nineteenth article of the church of England, viz. "A congregation of faithful men in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly ministered, according to Christ's ordinances, in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."

Yet let it be noted here, that such a society as this may be properly called a church, when their preachers, ministers, or all their officers are dead, or even before they have any minister, or any officers fixed amongst them; and without doubt they have power to receive any person that desires it, and makes a credible profession of christianity, into their society, having judged his profession credible, and declared him in their judgment fit for christian communion. But it would lead me too far from my present design to insist upon particular proof of these things, which has been often done, and which is now the pretty general opinion of men that are not attached to any particular party, but give themselves leave to think freely, and follow the dictates of reason and revelation.

Sect. III.—The ordinances of the gospel must be administered in the church with decency, and honour, and spiritual advantage: But the whole body of the church cannot thus administer them; therefore it is necessary that these concerns be committed to such persons as are peculiarly fitted for those administrations by knowledge and prudence, and all proper talents; and the church ought to be furnished with such officers who should be chosen and solemnly set apart, devoted and ordained

to this work. The particular forms of their choice and ordination do not enter into the present argument.

The business of receiving members into the communion of the church, and the forbidding or excluding of them is a matter of as serious importance as the administration of other christian ordinances; and oftentimes it is attended with great difficulty. A whole assembly of men cannot be supposed to manage this affair altogether with decency and regularity, and without confusion: Therefore it is abundantly convenient, if not necessary, to commit the first and special care of these matters also to particular persons of human and divine knowledge superior to the rest; persons of great skill in the things of God, in serious religion, and in the affairs and tempers of men, qualified with due zeal for the honour and purity of the ordinances and churches of Christ, and filled with great tenderness and compassion to the souls of men; persons of good judgment and discretion, of great meekness, condescension, and charity; that if possible they may not give occasion to the church to exclude any of the sheep of Christ from the visible fold, nor admit unclean animals into the flock.

The chief officers of a particular church, whether they be called bishops, ministers, presbyters, or elders, pastors, guides, leaders, governors or rulers, &c. are the proper persons to have the first oversight and chief care of this matter; and in our churches it is committed chiefly to them, to take account of the profession of christianity made by persons desiring communion, to give some general notices of it to the church, or a more particular narrative where it is desired: and to receive them to communion either with the explicit and formal vote of all the congregation, or only by their implicit and silent consent. But if it happen that there is but one minister or presbyter in that church, or if the ministers are young men of small experience in the world, it is usual and proper that some of the eldest, gravest and wisest members be deputed by the church to join with and assist the ministers in the care and management of this affair. Those persons who have been chosen by the church, and have been solemnly devoted by the church, and have also solemnly devoted themselves to that office or service, have been usually called ruling elders. And such officers have been supposed to be described in those words of St. Paul to Timothy; 1 Tim. v. 17. *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour*, that is, respect and maintenance: But especially if they are also preachers as well as rulers, if they *labour in the word and doctrine*. These are supposed to be called governments; 1 Cor. xii. 28. and Rom. xii. 8. *He that ruleth.*——But if such persons are but appointed to assist a minister, especially *one who is young* and inexperienced in the government of the

church, I will never quarrel with any man, whether he will call it a divine order, or merely prudential, since the scripture has not determined this matter with incontested evidence. These ministers, officers and persons so deputed by the church, are therefore the first proper judges of the credibility of any person professing the christian faith, and desiring communion with that church; for these are supposed to be qualified above others with christian knowledge and wisdom, and they are also appointed by the church to the care and conduct thereof.

Yet in this case they are not so absolute and supreme, but that the congregation must some way or other approve of their judgment, either by an explicit vote, or at least by a silent consent, before the proposed communicant is received to the communion of the church; for it is still the consent of the church that must make him a member of it. Or the congregation may for just reasons disallow of their judgment in particular cases; and if they proceed obstinately to mismanage their affairs of this kind, and especially in notorious instances, and make the terms of admission larger or narrower than Christ has appointed, or if they notoriously misapply the right rules of admission or exclusion to wrong persons, that church or society may reverse their sentence, and act according to their own judgment, and if it be needful may also call them to an account for it, and assume the judgment, exclusion and admission of communicants entirely and immediately into their own hands; till they shall chuse other officers who shall preside in this affair, and exercise this power more agreeably to those sacred rules and terms of communion which that society believes to be the will of Christ in his word.

Sect. IV.—This conduct of affairs seems to be founded on the very nature of religious societies, and the common light of reason; and it seems also to be much countenanced by a variety of scriptures in the New Testament, where the directions of the apostle concerning the receiving and excluding of members are addressed to the churches of Christ at Rome, at Corinth, at Thessalonica, &c. I might multiply quotations to this purpose; Rom. xv. 7. *Receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God:* Rom. xvi. 1, 2. *I commend unto you Phebe our sister—that ye receive her in the Lord, as becometh saints;* 1 Cor. v. 4. *In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan, &c.* Verse 7. *Purge ye out therefore the old leaven.* Verse 13. *Put away from among yourselves that wicked person;* 2 Thess. iii. 6. *Now we command you, brethren, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly.*

Though the apostle Paul gives directions to Timothy and Titus about the rejection of heretics, yet it must be noted that these two very extraordinary persons, evangelists divinely commissioned and endowed, and by virtue hereof might act in a superior way in every church whither they were sent: and they were to teach the churches the orders of Christ: Nor does it follow that every ordinary minister has the same power; nor indeed does it appear that Timothy and Titus were to exercise it without the churches' consent. For St. Paul himself when he gave apostolical orders for excommunicating the incestuous Corinthian, would have it done when the whole church was gathered together, and as an act of that particular community; as in the texts before cited. Though the seven epistles in the second and third chapters of the Revelation are inscribed to the angels or ministers of those seven churches, and directions are there given about the casting out false worshippers and idolaters, yet it is evident that the contents of these epistles are plainly addressed to the whole body of christians that made up those several societies or churches, and they were to cast out idolaters, &c. from among them, as an act of the churches by their ministers. Though ministers and elders are sometimes called guides and rulers, &c. yet it is never to be understood in so absolute a sense, as to take all power away from the society or congregation, and leave the ministers to tyrannize as they please over the churches, and, like Diotrephes, to admit and exclude whom they will; for which usurpation the apostle John severely censures him; 3 John, verses 9, 10. Now when such a mode of admission into churches as I have described, by the ministration of the elders, and the consent of the church, has the light of nature and reason leading us into it, and scripture gives frequent countenance to it by various rules and examples, it does not fall very short of a sacred institution.

Sect. V.—But it will be objected here, "that it may happen that the ministers may be in the right, and the people in the wrong, in their judgment in particular cases: And must the vote of the people decide such an affair, against the opinion of ministers, elders, or rulers?" I answer in the first place,

I. That when any person is proposed to the church, concerning whose admission the minister and people are not agreed, it is much better to persuade that person to seek communion with some other church, rather than occasion strife and debate betwixt the people and the minister. But if that cannot be conveniently, surely it is more adviseable in itself, and more acceptable to God, that any single person should deny himself the benefit of special ordinances, at least for a season, than become a bone of contention, and perhaps a sword of division, in a christian

church. A person of a true christian temper would not willingly admit a new member nor be admitted, to the real offence and grief of any persons that were there before. I say, in the next place,

II. That if this method of peace cannot obtain, but admission of the persons still pressed and pursued, it is the duty of the minister to endeavour, by all proper arguments, to convince and persuade the people, and lead them to practise what he esteems *the mind of Christ* in this case, and with much *gentleness to instruct them that oppose themselves;* 2 Tim. ii. 24. If this will not do, then he should lay the laws of Christ before the people, with great and awful solemnity, and acquaint them with the terms of communion which Christ has appointed, according to his own best understanding of the gospel: He may charge them, in the name of Christ, to receive or exclude such persons only whom Christ appoints to be received or excluded; and that as they will answer it at the bar of Christ. But if the people persist in their own judgment still, in opposition to the minister, they must be left to answer it to Christ their Judge; for Christ has left no infallible vicegerent here on earth, to govern his churches contrary to their own sense and interpretation of his written word.

It may be proper on such an occasion, that some friendly methods of private conference should be tried, and the reconciling assistance of other prudent ministers and christians desired. But if these attempts prove vain and ineffectual, and the difference still remains, there is no power on earth, that I know, which can authoritatively determine any minister to give the sacred ordinances of Christ contrary to his conscience; nor can any power on earth command and constrain a christian church to receive a person to their communion, whom they in their consciences judge unworthy of it; therefore rather than dwell together in endless contentions, the minister must peacefully resign his office in that church.

And the same rule must be followed in many other cases, wherein a minister and people resolve to disagree, besides in this point of admission to their communion, or exclusion from it. For it is better that the minister should leave himself to the providence of God for further service, than that a church of Christ should be rent in pieces by a minister's resolved continuance among them, and making parties and wars in so sacred a society. There is nothing perfect in human affairs on earth, where knowledge and grace are so imperfect. We must not expect complete purity and peace, till we arrive at the blessed communion of the church in heaven: Yet I may venture to affirm, that things would scarce ever arise to this extreme height of difference, if christian charity and love, humility and mutual

condescension, were but more universally taught and practised, and the furious and narrow spirits of men tempered and enlarged, according to the glorious pattern of the apostles of Christ.

SECT. VI.—Here will occur another enquiry also; and that is, "when the congregation itself is divided in their sentiments, how must any proposed question be determined? Or whether a proposed communicant must be admitted?" I answer; in all such cases, the light of nature and the common usage of mankind have determined it, that the greater number should carry the question according to their sentiment, and the lesser ought to submit. But I would take the liberty to give my opinion in point of prudence thus: That though, in questions of less moment, it is proper enough that the major vote should decide the case, yet, in an affair of considerable importance, such as the choice of a minister, or the receiving a member to constant communion, &c. if it were possible, I would obtain an universal concurrence of all the church; for it would be better, if such a thing could be so managed, as, that no old member of the church be made uneasy by receiving a new one; much less should a church, that will act with prudence, admit a new member contrary to the sentiments of their minister, or give occasion of grief to him, as I have before hinted. But, surely, I would never determine the affair only by a majority of one or two voices; for this will be in danger of giving so great an uneasiness to a considerable number of the church, though they happen to be the minor part, that oftentimes it will administer occasion for strife, division and separation.

There is one piece of prudence that we may learn from our greatest enemies, the pope, and the conclave of cardinals; who, in the election of a new pope, never appoint the person but by the vote of two-thirds of the college of cardinals; that in an affair of such importance, there may be no dangerous contention of parties after the person is elected. And I should think this so valuable a rule of prudence in the sacred affairs of the church of Christ, that no matter of moment should ever be determined, unless two-thirds or more of the congregation agree to it. And indeed, if there be a firm opposition made, but by two or three considerable members, against the admission of any new communicant, I would not be hasty to admit the person, but rather persuade him to delay, or to seek communion elsewhere, than endanger the peace of a whole church. I desire it may be noted here, that I have only delivered my private opinion concerning the distinct power of elders, ministers, and votes of the people, in admission of members to the communion of the church: But whether the power of receiving or excluding be vested entirely in the people, or in the minister, or in both together; whether by

a majority of votes, or universal consent of a particular church, it equally serves the purpose of my argument in most of the following questions upon this subject. I put this note only to secure my readers against any prejudice or hasty judgment against the following parts of the book, though they should happen to differ from me in the present question.

Quest. III.—*What are the Particular Terms of Christian Communion? Or, what things are necessary to make the Profession of Christianity credible?*

Sect. I.—Having enquired who are the persons that must judge of the credibility of our profession in order to christian communion, we proceed next to enquire, "What things go to make up a credible profession?" and we must take great care in this matter not to make new terms and conditions of our own, which Christ the Lord and king of his church has not made; nor to insist upon any thing as necessary to render a profession credible, which may not be fairly deduced from the rules and examples recorded in the New Testament, and the application of them to our present age, according to the different circumstances of times, places, and persons. It must be granted that there are several parts of necessary conduct in christian churches and ordinances, that arise from the very nature and reason of things, from the very being of societies, and from the circumstances of all human affairs; and we must not expect that all these should be dictated by divine revelation, and written down with all their minute particulars in express words of scripture. It would be endless for the sacred writers to have attempted it, and most unreasonable for us to expect it: For the light of nature and reason is given us by God himself for our direction, as well as the light of revelation; and whatsoever rules may be drawn by plain reasoning, and by easy and necessary inference from the comparison of scripture-times with our own, may and ought to be esteemed a part of our direction in these affairs, as well as the express words of scripture; for scripture itself often gives us but very short and imperfect hints of the whole process of civil or ecclesiastical transactions. This shall be more fully made appear, when I come to answer an objection raised from primitive practice.

After a diligent search into the holy scripture, and careful observation of christian churches and their affairs, these three things appear to me to be necessary, at least in our times, to make a profession of christianity sufficiently credible for christian communion.

First, A confession of all the necessary articles of christian religion. Secondly, A professed subjection to all the necessary rules of christian duty. Thirdly, Such a blameless and holy practice in life, as may make the profession of the lips appear, in the common judgment of men, to be the sincere sense of the heart.

NOTE, under the first head, I say, a confession of all the necessary articles of christian religion, rather than the christian faith, that I may plainly include the practical articles of repentance and new obedience, &c. as well as the doctrinal ones. Reason and revelation, nature and scripture, seem to make these three things necessary to a credible profession of christianity. For if a man makes never so fair an appearance of christian duties in his practice, yet if in words he refuses to profess the christian faith, or deny any necessary doctrine or duty of it, he is not worthy of christian communion. Or if a man give never so good an account of his knowledge and belief of all the articles of the christian religion, and his moral conversation and carriage towards men, has been generally blameless in the eye of the world; yet if he utterly refuse to declare his sincere intention to practise any of the plain and necessary duties of the christian religion, he cannot be accounted worthy of christian communion. Or if his words make never so full a confession of all the doctrines and duties of christianity, and profess a sincere belief of and submission to them, yet if in his constant practice he be a liar, an adulterer, a drunkard, a known cheat, or a robber, &c. his wicked practice makes his profession incredible, he is not worthy of christian communion.

SECT. II.—But I would deliver my thoughts more fully on these three particulars that make up the credibility of a profession, and shew what is implied in each of them. First, a confession of all the necessary articles of christian religion, includes in it those articles that are necessary to salvation, and those that are necessary to maintain and practise this communion; which two are certainly different from each other. Though it has been often said in a charitable way, and with very good reason in general discourse, that "there should be nothing required in order to christian communion which is not necessary to salvation," yet this cannot exclude the knowledge of what christian communion is. The very nature of the thing requires that we should know how to practise this communion, before we can actually practise and enjoy it. Now as the Lord's-supper itself is not of absolute necessity to salvation, the things necessary to communicate in the Lord's-supper, must imply something more than merely the things necessary to salvation; as I shall also make plainly appear under the seventh question, which will be entirely employed on this first part of christian profession, and therefore I proceed to the second.

:CT. III.—*Secondly*, a professed subjection to all the ne- rules of christian duty, includes in it not only those hat are necessary to salvation, but those duties that are ıry to practise christian communion. The first sort of ın duties are those that are necessary to salvation, such fear, love and worship of God; faith, love, and obe- towards our Lord Jesus Christ: repentance of sin, humble trust or hope in the promises of the gospel, ll be shewn at large under the seventh question. Now rofession does not signify a mere engagement or pro- ıereafter to fulfil these duties, but also a profession that ve begun to practise them already: for we are not re- into a church in order *to receive Jesus Christ the Lord*, pon a credible profession that *we have received Jesus* already; Rom. xv. 7. *Receive ye one another as Christ* ceived *us*. We must have therefore some evidence and hat we have *received Christ* in all his necessary offices, as ord and Saviour, and consequently that *he has received us* we should propose ourselves to be received by any visible a.

Now if a man professes *repentance*, it implies that he has made sensible of sin, that he has been taught the evil of t he mourns for what is past, and is daily watching against f a man profess *faith in Christ as a propitiation and atone-* it implies that he is acquainted with his guilt in the sight d, that he is in danger of divine wrath, and that he is not o make atonement for his own sins, and therefore he *flies fuge to Jesus Christ*, that he may obtain *peace with God*. professes *a hope of heaven*, it implies in it that he is ıvouring to prepare for this heaven; *for every man that this hope purifieth himself*; 1 John iii. 3. If he pro- to take *Christ for his example*, it implies a desire and ıpt to imitate our blessed Lord in self-denial, patience, &c.

In order to make this profession of our faith and hope cre- , it is the custom of some churches to require no more than erson's own general profession that he does believe, and ıt, and hope, as in Acts viii. 37. *I believe, &c.* It is the m of other churches to desire also some further evidences e truth of his faith, hope, and repentance, by a more par- ır account of some of those things which are implied e exercises of those graces; and this has been usually l, though not properly, the *rendering a reason of the hope is in him*; as 1 Pet. iii. 15.

The first of these methods hath considerable advantages rds the enlargement of particular churches; and, so far can judge, such churches seem to require all that is abso-

lutely necessary to the nature and *being* of a church of Christ. The second has also some valuable advantages towards the *well-being* of a church, and the purity and the profit thereof in the inward and experimental parts of christianity, though some persons of extreme bashfulness may have been hereby discouraged and hindered from christian communion. Both of these methods have some advantages, and some inconveniences; and it is not my design at present to decide which of the two has the greatest; but this is certain, that every church must judge for itself how large, or how narrow; how general, or how particular a profession of christianity must be, in order to render it credible to themselves; yet let each church take heed that they make not the door of admission larger or straiter than Christ has made it.

The second sort of christian duties are those that are necessary to practise christian communion, especially if constant communion be desired, such as, to meet at the same time, and in the same place with some church of Christ, to perform christian worship, with them there, to agree to the general methods of worship, the customs, order, and discipline that are practised in that church, so far as they can find them agreeable to the will of Christ in his word, or so far as they are necessary to maintain the being, order and peace of all religious societies. This is so much, and so plainly implied in the very nature of communion or fellowship, that it is always supposed to be consented to, even where it is not expressly mentioned; this will appear more evident under the next question.

This profession of consent to the worship or order of that church, does not forbid or prevent any person from attempting to reform any mismanagements in the worship or discipline of the church by argument and friendly persuasions; but only it restrains him from all tumultuous and irregular proceedings, in order to such reformation; according to the great canon of the apostle, "*let all things be done decently, and in order;*" 1 Cor. xiv. 40. It is upon this account he forbids the Corinthians *to speak with unknown tongues without interpretation*, to break in upon the public worship, or for *several persons speak all at once, &c.* and such natural rules of decency as these, may, in some sense, be called the commands of our Lord, ver. 37. to which we owe a professed subjection. But if a man cannot consent to the most constant and essential forms of ministration, worship and discipline, as practised in that church, it is far better that he should join himself to some other society, whose chief practices and government are more agreeable to his own sentiments.

SECT. IV.—The third thing that goes to make up the *credibility of our* profession, is "such a blameless and holy

practice in life, as may make the profession of the lips appear, in the common judgment of men, to be the sincere sense of the heart:" By which we are not to understand a perfection of virtue, or a freedom from every vice: *for there is no man living on earth, that doth good, and sinneth not; in many things we offend all*; and the best of men have reason to complain, *that the evil they would not do*, sometimes prevails over them, and they are *led captive to the law of sin*; James iii. 2. Rom. vii. 19, 20.

But it is necessary that persons professing christianity should be free from all gross and scandalous sins, nor be guilty of those crimes in their allowed practice, which in many places of scripture exclude men from the kingdom of heaven; 1 Cor. v. 9. *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God*; 1 Cor. v. 11. *I have written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat:* And if this text forbids us to keep free and sociable converse with such persons, or to sit down at our tables with those who profess christianity, and practise wickedness, much more does it become a church to exclude them from its sacred society and fellowship, and to forbid them to sit down at the table of the Lord. Common railers and slanderers, such as the apostle James describes, are to be shut out from communion; James i. 26. *If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain;* that is, his religious performances are evidently ineffectual for his own salvation; therefore while he indulges his tongue in a scandalous liberty, his pretences and profession of christianity are vain and incredible, and consequently he has no right to christian communion. The glory of God who is holy, the honour of our Lord Jesus Christ who is our pattern of holiness, the credit of the gospel which is *a doctrine according to godliness*, as well as the common sense of mankind, exclude all such persons from societies of strict and pure religion.

In the very first dawning of the gospel, John the Baptist, the fore-runner of Christ, forbid the professing Pharisees from baptism, for want of *fruits of repentance* answerable to their profession; Mat. iii. 7, 8. And in following times the Ephesian converts made their faith appear by *confessing* what they believed, *and shewing their deeds*; Acts xix. 18, 19. And if there be not a frequent account of such instances in scripture, it is because the nature and reason of things render the necessity of it suffi-

ciently evident without many express instances. The enquiry of a church into the conversation of the person who desires its communion, may be adjusted and regulated under these four heads, viz. whether he be sober, just, and good, as well as religious. So much of these four characters as lie within the public observation of the world, are necessary in order to become a member of the church.

1. Whether he be sober and temperate in some good measure; free from the vices of drunkenness, uncleanness, violent wrath, railing, revenge, &c. for otherwise it is plain he cannot belong to Christ, *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts;* Gal. v. 23. and the foregoing scriptures I have cited run much upon this point.

2. Whether he be just and honest among his neighbours, a man of fair dealing, faithful to his word, sincere and without hypocrisy in the common affairs of life; for if a person be of a designing, tricking and deceitful temper and carriage among men, how can we trust his profession in the things of God? Or receive it as credible? Besides, the unjust are expressly excluded *the kingdom of God;* 1 Cor. vi. 8. *And all liars shall have their part in the burning lake;* Rev. xxi. 8.

3. Whether he be good, kind, charitable? Whether he hath *that love to his neighbour which is the fulfilling of the duties* of the second table; Rom. xiii. 8, 9. Whatsoever we profess of faith, yet *without love we are nothing*; 1 Cor. xiii. 2. and it may be enquired too what love he has to fellow-christians, for it is an appointed mark of the disciples of Christ; John xiii. 35 *Hereby shall all men know ye are my disciples if ye love one another. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?* 1 John iv. 20. Without love, and particularly to fellow-christians, he can never be fit for such a holy fellowship, which is to be managed all in love, and whereof love is one of the greatest duties.

4. Whether he be religious and godly? Though inward piety is chiefly to be known to men by the profession of the mouth, and the two foregoing general heads in some measure answer this end, yet there should be some appearances of piety also in our conversation in the world, in order to give us a full right to christian communion. In such an enquiry as this, at least it must be found that such a person is not a scoffer at religion, that he does not make a jest of things sacred, that he uses the name of God with reverence in common conversation, that he speaks honourably of Christ, his gospel, and his ordinances upon every just occasion, and that he frequents some places of religious worship; for we are *to look diligently that there be no profane person in our churches*, as well as no *fornicator*; Heb. xii

15. Thus I have given a particular account of those three things that join to make up the credibility of our profession, in order to be regularly admitted to the communion of a christian church.

Sect. V.—Objection. But why must there be so many things required to make a profession of christianity credible in our day, beyond what was required in the primitive times? Then they only *confessed Christ to be the Messiah, the Son of God*, or that he was raised from the dead in order to baptism and admission into the church. So it was when many *thousands were added to the church in one day*; so the eunuch when Philip baptized him; Acts viii. 37. So the jailor and Lydia; Acts xvi. 15, 35. and many others; or at most, their present works were thought sufficient to confirm their confessions; Acts xix. 18. *Many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds*, without long enquiries into the whole of their faith, or the course of their conversation.

Answer I. The account that the scripture gives of these transactions is very short, yet sufficient to inform us that there was more discourse on both sides, in order to the baptizing their converts, than is expressly written down; for even the confessions that Lydia and the jailor made are not written, but it is said in general, *they believed*; therefore we are not to take it for granted there was nothing else required, because the scripture in those places mentions no more than a word or two of short confession.

Answer II. In several places where such transactions are recorded in scripture, there is no mention of their works or conversation at all; and surely no minister or church in our day would imagine, that a mere confession, *that Jesus is the Christ*, without any further enquiry either after knowledge, faith, or works, is sufficient ground for admission to sacred ordinances; for then we must take in almost whole nations. Besides, if a man did make such a profession, *that Christ was the Son of God*, and his conversation were blameless to outward appearance; yet who of our ministers, or which of our churches would receive him without some further enquiry into his knowledge of God and Christ, and the gospel? Therefore it is sufficiently plain, by the acknowledgment and practice of those who make this objection, that they themselves do not think it necessary to confine their enquiries only to such a single sentence of profession as the scripture-history expresses, and seek no further.

Answer III. It is sufficiently evident to me, that the fundamental or necessary articles of religion are not the same in all ages and places; but more or less knowledge is necessary, in order to salvation, according to the degrees of divine revelation in several *nations or ages*. The belief of the crucifixion

and resurrection of Christ was not fundamental in Christ's own life-time; for when he spake of his own death, Peter replied, *far be it from thee, Lord;* Mat. xvi. 22. *This shall not be unto thee:* And the rest of the apostles *knew not* certainly *that Christ should rise from the dead, for some doubted* even after his resurrection; Mat. xxviii. 17. Yet they were the chief of the church of Christ upon earth at that time. So in the very first promulgation of the gospel, before judaism was quite destroyed, the apostles themselves had not so full a knowledge of christianity as they afterwards, by degrees, received from the instructions of the blessed Spirit. Many passages of scripture discover this, as Acts x. 14—17. and xv. 7—30. and Gal. ii. 2—14. At this time there was scarce any thing of the New Testament written; and though the evidences of the christian religion were great, yet the opportunities of a large and extensive knowledge were exceeding few and small among the common converts, if compared with our age: Therefore the Messiahship of Christ, his death, and resurrection, and exaltation, with a very few alterations from natural or Jewish religion, seem to be the chief things then necessary to believe in order to salvation, or to profess in order to communion.

But when in process of time the Jewish economy was divinely destroyed, christianity grown to its full perfection, the canon of scripture completed, and several christian truths and duties more plainly and expressly revealed, it may be well supposed that where this canon of scripture is freely published, God may require something more of christian knowledge in order to salvation, than in the very first years of the gospel. I speak this last proposition but modestly, and as a probable opinion but if this be true, then it clearly follows that there are more things necessary to make a profession of christianity credible at this day in most places of England, than were necessary even in Judea in the first years of christianity.

Answ. IV. If the essentials of any doctrine were perfectly the same in all ages, yet the credibility of its profession is exceeding different, according to different circumstances of time place and persons. Where hardships and sufferings attend the professors of any religion, a very slight profession of it will persuade me that a man understands it, and is very sincere in it because he exposes himself to suffering by this means: But where there is full liberty given, or especially if external advantages attend it, there every one will be ready to profess, though he has little knowledge or sincerity. Those first times of the gospel, were times of reproach and persecution: the sect of christians was every where spoken against, and death and dangers attended it on all sides. Now to confess the name of Christ *amidst the reproaches* of the world, against the opposition of

the wise and the foolish, *the Jews and the Greeks*, the threatening of kings, and the violence of the people, was a more powerful and evident proof of the truth of their faith, than if they had made long speeches, and had the testimony of a continued blameless conversation in a land and age of christians. Surely that confession, which was sufficient for martyrdom, if their enemies knew it; must be sufficient for communion, when made known to the church. But in our age and nation where christianity is the profession of the time and the country, a mere acknowledgment of the name, or death and resurrection of Christ, is not sufficient to prove us knowing or sincere christians; and there ought to be so much larger a confession, and so many credible circumstances attending it, before we can reasonably, or upon just grounds, believe a man to be a true christian. All these requirements which I have before mentioned being put together, do not amount to so credible a profession, as for a man to say boldly this one sentence, "I am a christian," in the face of death and martyrdom.

Answ. V. I might add also in the last place, that a great number of the conversions of the primitive christians, were so sudden and surprizing by the extraordinary effusion of the Holy Spirit, that the very miracle of their conversion did sufficiently answer the end of a large and particular confession. The work of God on the souls of men was sometimes in an instant, and they were made believers, out of unbelievers, at once; *the Spirit fell on them while they heard the word*; and when they who just before professed Judaism or heathenism, and neither knew nor loved Jesus Christ, confessed his name and his religion at once; the wonderful change was evident to all, and they had no long accounts to give either of their faith or conversion, their knowledge or conversation; nor was it required, because the miracle itself made their profession sufficiently credible. Besides, spiritual gifts were conferred on multitudes in that day as soon as they were converted, and gave sufficient evidence for acceptance unto baptism, as Acts x. 44, 46, 47. *While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then answered Peter, can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost, as well as we?* He that well considers all these things, and sets the affairs of the primitive times in a due light, and thus compares them with our own, will see plainly that something more is necessary to make a profession of christianity credible in our day, than was needful in the first age of the church. And yet still we may be said to follow the rules and examples of scripture, while we require nothing more in order to communion than what is necessary to make our profession credible; for so much of this has

been always required even in scripture-times, and the word of God and the very nature of things seem to demand it.

QUEST. IV.—*What is a Church-covenant? And whether it be necessary to Christian Communion?*

Besides the things that have been already mentioned, as included in a credible profession of christianity, it is worth our enquiry, whether any solemn covenant be needful in order to communion? Now to answer this question we must distinguish between that communion which is fixed and constant in one church, or that which is only occasional. By fixed, constant, and complete communion, I mean the joining myself to a particular church, so as to become a complete member of that religious society, engaging to perform at appointed times and places, my most usual public worship with that society rather than with others, to assist in all services necessary to support that society, and partake of all the privileges of it for mutual edification and comfort, and to maintain the public honour of Christ in the world.

By occasional communion, I understand a mere participation of the general and special ordinances of the gospel with a particular church for a time, under the general character and claim of christianity, and so far as occasions of providence may make it convenient and desirable. But not to become properly a member of that particular society, nor to be interested in the affairs, regulation or management of it. Now for this occasional communion, there is no necessity that every such communicant should enter solemnly into a covenant or agreement with that particular church, any farther than only to partake of those special ordinances for a season in a decent and regular way. It is sufficient for this sort of communion, that a person make such a credible profession of christianity as has been before described, or that he be recommended by some other church, or the elders thereof, before whom he has made such a credible profession: or that it be some way ascertained to the church whose communion he desires, that he has done it.

But where fixed and complete fellowship with a particular society is desired, the very nature of things seems to require it, that there should be such a mutual agreement among the persons that intend to practise this constant communion. This is part of the second thing requisite to make our profession credible, viz. *a professed subjection* to all the necessary duties of christianity, as will plainly appear by what follows:

A church is composed of such persons as agree to worship and walk together in all the ordinances of Christ, viz. *to attend on the ministry* or preaching of the word, on praying to God to-

gether, on speaking or singing the praises of God, and celebrating all the institutions of Christ, especially that great one, *the supper of the Lord*, which is called communion.

They devote themselves *first to the Lord* in public by their profession, as they have done before in secret; covenanting to walk with him in all his ordinances; then they give up themselves to one another, and *they receive one another in the Lord*, which is the word used most frequently in the New Testament for admission into the communion of saints, or being solemnly acknowledged as fellow-christians, and consequently as having a right to special ordinances. They profess their agreement or consent to worship usually together, to attend usually on the ordinances of communion as administered in that church, and to fulfil all necessary duties of christian fellowship in a special manner towards one another for mutual edification, as far as God shall instruct and enable them: And this is called the church-covenant, which is in truth nothing else but a voluntary solemn agreement with some particular society, to practise those social duties of the christian religion among them at appointed times and places, which Christ himself has required in general to be practised somewhere when opportunity is found.

Such a consent or agreement to meet at stated times and places for social worship, is not indeed formally instituted in the New Testament: But there are several passages in the New Testament which very plainly suppose it, as will appear immediately. And the reason why it was not delivered in the form of the gospel institution is this, because it is a principle of natural religion; the light of reason teaches it, and upon this account it was not set down as an institution under the Old Testament, though doubtless the patriarchs and holy men of old practised it, ever since there was any such thing as public worship set up in the world: So the Israelites met and read the scripture, and prayed in their synagogues without the formality of a particular divine institution; whenever a synagogue was built, the neighbouring inhabitants by consent weekly worshipped there.

I confess where magistrates take upon them to impose a religion upon the people, and national and parochial churches are appointed by some assuming powers, this free covenant or agreement degenerates into a constrained consent: but such a free and explicit agreement is more necessary among those christians who are left to their own liberty, or who dissent from a national and established church. This covenant has indeed been much censured both by the profane world, and by some fellow-christians: And it must be confessed that some few ministers and churches of rigid and narrow principles, have heretofore given too just an occasion of censure, by drawing up their particular church-covenants in a long form of writing, and inserting several things into

them that were by no means necessary to common christianity, and such as favoured too much of a party-spirit; but churches and ministers in our age better understand christian liberty and true principles of charity. I know of none of these impositions in our day; and if our present practice in this matter be censured by any, I am persuaded it is merely for want of understanding it: For if it be fairly represented, as I have described it, it appears to be a piece of mere natural religion, and social worship; and is so far from being an addition to the rules of the gospel, or an imposition on the consciences of christians, that no voluntary religious society can possibly subsist without some such covenant. When any person therefore joins himself to, and becomes a member of a christian church, this covenant or mutual agreement is always implied where it is not expressed; and those that have been so weak as to ridicule the forms of it, yet are so wise as to practise the substance of it.

Indeed the mere necessity and reason of the thing is so plain and convincing, that one would wonder that any man should speak against it, if he will but give himself leave to consider the following particulars:

1. How can there be a receiving of *each other in the Lord*, at the first forming of a church, if there be not a mutual agreement, or giving up themselves to each other to worship the Lord together? Christians are commanded to do it, *that with one mind and one mouth they may glorify God*; Rom. xv. 6, 7. And how can any particular member afterward be received to communion, if there be not such a society or church to receive him, and to which he may give up himself to walk with them in the Lord?

2. How can there be any social worship performed, if there be no agreement to worship together in the same place, and at the same time? If all the christians must always be at perfect liberty to worship where they will, and communicate every Lord's-day at a different place, a minister may sometimes be left to preach to the seats and walls, if none are bound to attend on his ministrations: And on the other hand, surely the minister may take as much liberty as the people; and he may absent himself and worship elsewhere, when they are all gathered together and wait for a sermon. Thus many assemblies for worship may be without a teacher, and many teachers without an assembly, and some small assemblies have many teachers.

3. How can there be any provision made of a proper place of worship for a whole assembly, or any conveniences or decencies that are requisite for sacred actions, without such an agreement? How can a table be appointed or furnished with bread and wine, and vessels to contain them, fit to distribute *the Lord's-supper*, unless several persons have agreed upon it?

4. How can the minister be maintained if there be no socie-

ties agreeing to attend on their ministry, and support and encourage it? Yet this is a duty incumbent on all those who are ministered unto; Gal. vi. 6. 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14. Each society is bound by the rules of the gospel to maintain and honour their own ministers *who labour among them in word and doctrine*; 1 Tim. v. 17. and 1 Thess. v. 12, 13.

5. How can the poor of Christ be fed and clothed, if christians are not distributed into distinct societies, and each take care of their own poor? Eph. iv. 28. To whom should the poor christians have applied of old, if not to their own societies? For single persons cannot nor are they bound wholly to maintain them. They must therefore be distributed into distinct societies, that every poor christian may know where to apply for relief; and that each of the richer may know also to whom they should give their constant alms, and look upon themselves in a special manner bound to supply. If all the poor saints in a nation were straggling abroad, and belonged to no christian society, how should the richer persons, or richer societies know these are God's poor, and *of the household of faith*, whom they are bound in a special manner to take care of; Gal. vi. 10. unless they have made a profession to some church of Christ, and are known by this means? So great is the necessity of these things to be done by particular societies, that christian princes and governors, in order to have these things regularly performed, have thrown all the dominions into the form of distinct parishes, or single congregations: though they have had not much regard to any rules of the New Testament, in establishing their church-worship and discipline in other parts of it.

6. How can the ordinances of censure and excommunication be ever administered, if there be no societies agreeing to walk and worship together? If any person be charged with a fault or heinous crime, he will reply, he belongs not to any society who shall assume a right to deal with him and censure him? And it is impossible that the whole visible church of Christ can meet together, or take cognizance of such particular causes, and give censures, unless we set up a pope, or council, or conclave of cardinals to do all this, and constrain all particular churches to submit to their sovereign and universal dictates.

There must be therefore an agreement betwixt a company of professing christians, giving up themselves *to one another*, and *receiving each other in the Lord*, in order to maintain the church of Christ in the world, his gospel or his honour; to support his poor, or his ministers, or the purity of his church, or of any holy ordinance. Receive therefore the apostle's exhortation, Rom. xv. 6, 7. *That ye may with one mind and one mouth glorify God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ—receive ye one another as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.*

QUEST. V.—*When a Person is once joined to a Particular Church, whether he may never worship with other Churches occasionally, or change his fixed Communion to another Church?*

I answer, That this agreement of worshipping together is not so strictly to be understood, as if none of these persons should ever worship any where else; for there are various occasions in the course of life, that may lead the members of one church now and then to worship with another. Since we all hold the same faith and worship in the essentials of it, we are to esteem ourselves in general communion with the whole visible church of Christ; and sometimes we join in worship with others, merely to testify our charity and christian fellowship with those that in the circumstantials of religion differ from us; sometimes to accompany a particular friend; to hear a particular minister; to attend on some special occasion of prayer, or preaching, on such occasions we may very reasonably worship with various assemblies: Or perhaps we may be called to travel from home, and to spend many seasons of worship absent from our own particular community, and then we join with those churches where providence may cast us.

When christians travel where they are unknown, or make any considerable stay in distant places, they should carry with them a letter of recommendation from the officers or members of their own church, to any churches of Christ, where they may come; such are the letters that St. Paul speaks of, 2 Col. iii. 1. *Do we need letters of recommendation to you, or from you?* And thus he himself recommends christians to distant churches, as Rom. xvi. 1, 2. *I commend unto you, Phœbe, our sister, who is a servant of the church at Cenchrea, that ye receive her in the Lord as becometh saints,* that is, that ye receive her to the participation of christian ordinances, as well as *assist her* in any civil affairs. This agreement or church-covenant, therefore, only obliges persons, as far as they can with tolerable conveniency of affairs and spiritual edification, to make that church, of which they are members, the usual place of their worship, and especially their participation of the Lord's-supper, whereby special communion is maintained.

The question concerning the changing of our fixed communion from one church to another, may be thus determined. All church-fellowship is appointed for the public honour of God, for our mutual assistance and edification in spiritual things, and for the support of the interest and kingdom of Christ among men. Whensoever therefore any member cannot attain those ends in the particular church he belongs to, after solemn consideration and prayer to God for counsel, he may desire a dismission to some *other church,* and upon these reasons the church ought to give it.

brother, or a sister, is not in bondage in such cases; and the pastoral office, and all church power is *for edification, and not for destruction*, as St. Paul speaks, 2 Cor. xiii. 10. Now this necessity of changing our communion may happen several ways: as when a person removes his habitation to such a distance, as that he cannot conveniently attend and perform the duties of church-fellowship in that society; or when the church falls into pernicious errors and heresies; or when upon any other account his own edification in that church is not to be attained; or when other necessary circumstances of life, or religion, make his union to another church of much more importance. But in these cases let the conscience of a man be well informed, and let him duly consider all circumstances before he put this in practice: For it argues a light and changeable temper to be running always from one church to another, and unbecoming the spirit of the gospel. Yet where the reasons of removing this communion from one church to another are just and good, and after due application to the church, if they refuse to dismiss him, he may fairly depart without it, and join himself to any other church that is satisfied in his credible profession of christianity.

QUEST. VI.—*Whether fixed Communion with some Particular Church be a Necessary Duty? And whether any may be admitted to Occasional Communion, who are no fixed Members of any Church?*

It is a natural enquiry flowing from the former question whether any person is at liberty to content himself merely with occasional communion, sometimes with one church and sometimes with another, without becoming a fixed member of any church at all? Or whether a church may forbid a person occasional communion, who refuses utterly to join in any fixed communion? The duties of holy fellowship for the glory of God and mutual edification, which are most regularly practised in a state of fixed communion, are so many and so plain in scripture, and in the reason of things, that very few persons can be exempted from them: For those duties are such as these, to attend on public ministrations together, to pray and confer together about spiritual things, with a sort of holy intimacy or friendship, to encourage and support the ministry, to maintain the poor, to uphold the public worship of God by assisting in the provision of a place, and all other external things necessary for public worship, to receive members into the church, to censure and reprove, and cast out scandalous members, to watch over one another in their holy conversation, &c. to admonish and to receive admonitions. I grant that so many of these duties as can be conveniently performed toward all fellow-christians, should never be omitted

where providence gives just occasion; but since each christian cannot watch over all others, worship with all others, assist toward the maintenance of all the poor, nor all the ministers, &c. those with whom he agrees to worship in a stated way, are the persons to whom he is most immediately called to fulfil these kind offices, and has fairer opportunities to do it. And as I have shewn before, that public worship could never be certainly, regularly and comfortably maintained, without such a fixed communion, and every person that refuses such services to Christ and the church, must have very plain and constraining reasons to excuse his neglect.

Besides the privileges of fixed fellowship are, or should be alluring and encouraging; such as, their opportunities of serving Christ in his public interest in the world, supporting his name among men, their vote in chusing ministers or officers of the church, and their interest in the prayers, cares and watchfulness of the church, for them, and over them, their special right to the spiritual assistance of the ministers and elders of that church in private counsels, admonitions, and prayers with them and for them; their own temporal support, assistance and relief by the church, if they fall into poverty, &c. It is my opinion that scarce any person can be justly exempted, or excused, from fixed communion somewhere, but those, who by reason of their different opinions, unhappy temper, or some special circumstances of life, are under some sort of incapacity of fulfilling several of those duties, and yet by their credible profession appear worthy to partake of the special ordinances of the church.

And if there be any person to be found in such circumstances, I should think it is only such as these: 1. One that has no fixed abode, but his business of life is at all uncertainties, and calls him perpetually to change his residence: Such were the apostles and evangelists, and the itinerant preachers of the first century, together with their attendants, who seem to be settled members of no particular church. Or 2. Such a one that differs exceedingly in his sentiments in some important doctrines, or practical points of religion, from all the churches of Christ near him, and yet may be supposed to hold all the necessary articles of the christian faith, but may not be so fit to assist as a member in the affairs of a church of so different opinions. Or, lastly, there may be such a person as may give some credible evidences of true piety in his heart, but his natural temper is so violent, his spirit so various and inconstant, that he can scarce confine himself to the settled orders of any community, but will be more likely to divide a congregation, than to edify it in love.

Perhaps it may be lawful and proper; nay, I add further, perhaps it is a necessary duty at some seasons, and upon very *good evidence* of their christianity, to receive such sort of per-

ons as these to occasional communion, though they have no fixed relation to any particular church; and the general rules of christianity will oblige them to perform several relative duties towards their fellow-christians, and to help to support the external charges of those churches, with whom for a season they hold fellowship. But after all, I must confess that the special duties, which belong to a fixed settled communion of christians, are so generally plain in scripture, and so necessary from the very nature of religious societies, as described under the fourth question, that in my opinion, any church of Christ has reason to make very careful enquiry into the real christianity of a person who desires occasional communion only, but utterly refuses all manner of fixed communion with any church where he has proper opportunity; unless his habitation be always unsettled, or his circumstances very peculiar, or he can give some other just reason of his refusal to the church. I should also add in this place, that if persons should be freely and readily indulged and tolerated in this sort of loose communion, because they may have some sort of appearance of reason for it, others that have much less reason, or none at all, might probably demand and expect it: and these examples would tend greatly to the dissolution and confusion of churches; in such a case, though it may be barely *lawful*, yet it seems *not to be expedient*, and therefore should not be commonly practised, since it leads to the ruin of churches, *rather than to their edification;* 1 Cor. x. 23. except in cases extraordinary.

Another very obvious question arises here, viz. Whether a church, or religious society, may refuse a person who offers himself to become a fixed member of that church in constant and complete communion, and makes a visible and credible profession of his faith? Whether a church can lawfully forbid such a person to become a complete member, and restrain him only to a sort of occasional or incomplete communion?

Answer. Though it is certain that without such fixed societies or churches, public christianity could not be well maintained, and therefore far the greatest part of christians are certainly obliged to become members of some particular christian society; yet as there may be some peculiar cases which may excuse a person from fixed communion and membership, so there may be peculiar cases also which may excuse a church from receiving some persons to complete membership with them, though they may admit them to occasional communion.

Let it be considered, that by admitting a person to fixed communion, and making him a member of that particular society, he not only acquires a right to join with the society in all the ordinances of the gospel and special communion, in public on the Lord's-days, but he hath a right to be with them at any more private meetings of the whole church, and to consult and act in

their special affairs: He has a right to attend on such meetings for considering of the circumstances and state of the church, for regulating things that are amiss, for altering any of their customs, for distributing monies to the poor, for chusing a pastor or other officers, for admitting members, and for exercising the discipline of the church, &c. He acquires also a right in joint-partnership to the temporal possessions of the society, suppose it be a meeting-house for public worship, vessels of plate for church communion, or any houses, or temporal goods or donatives, which may belong to that particular society.

Now though the laws of Christ require us to receive every visible christian, who desires it, to communion in public worship, and in special ordinances of the gospel, because he is fit for it, yet those laws do not require that every such person should be admitted to the peculiar councils and affairs of any particular society, because perhaps he is really unfit for it. Perhaps they know, or have abundant reason to believe, that his different opinions, or his unhappy temper, or his peculiar circumstances, would render him a very troublesome member of it, that he would raise parties in the choice of officers, or in admission of members, or in distributing to the poor, or in the regulation of other church affairs; and therefore they allow him only occasional communion with them, which is all that seems to be his duty with regard to that particular church, and which is all the duty which the laws of reason, or of religion, seem to demand of them toward him.

Besides, let it be further considered, that whatsoever instances of christian fellowship in sacred things the laws of Christ may demand for such a person, yet it is certain the laws of Christ do not demand for him any share in the temporal possessions of that religious society, nor in the distribution of their temporal things, unless it be perhaps to relieve him in some degree, if he be necessitous. Therefore the laws of Christ do not require that society to receive such a person to complete communion and membership, to introduce him into their councils and affairs, or to vest him in any of their temporal possessions, since it is evident he will become a very troublesome member, and endanger, if not destroy, the edification and peace of the particular society or church. *Let all things be done to edification*; 1 Cor. xiv. 26. *Follow those things which make for peace, and things whereby one may edify another*; Rom. xiv. 19.

QUEST. VII.—*What Knowledge is necessary for Christian Communion?*

SECT. I. Under the third question I have shewn that the *knowledge necessary* to communion, includes in it both a

knowledge of what is necessary to salvation, and a knowledge of what is further necessary to maintain and enjoy this holy communion: The very nature of things requires this.

First, Let us consider the things necessary to salvation. How many articles of the christian faith or practice are necessary to our salvation? or in other words, how many fundamentals are there, is not expressly determined in any part of the scripture. It is a question that has troubled the christian churches almost two hundred years, ever since the reformation began, but has never yet been decided to the common satisfaction even of those that held the scripture to be the only and perfect rule of faith and practice. Therefore as every man must judge for himself concerning the fundamentals of christianity, in order to examine his own heart, and evidence to himself his hopes of salvation; so every particular church must judge for itself, which are the fundamentals or necessary articles of christianity, to examine those that propose themselves to communion, and evidence their right to it. I grant this, that in determining the nature or number of necessary articles, the churches of Christ ought to govern their sentiments by the rules of scripture, as near as they can find them by comparing one place with another, and form their judgment in this matter by a large and extensive charity. A general love to mankind, the dutiful imitation of God our Saviour, and the exemplary practice of the blessed apostles, oblige us to make as few articles necessary as is consistent with the great ends of the christian religion, and to impose nothing more upon the consciences of men in this respect, than we solemnly believe our Lord Jesus Christ himself imposes in his word, as we will answer it at the great day of his appearance. Yet it is certain, and without controversy, that there are several articles both of doctrine and duty, of such importance, that a man cannot be a true christian without them, nor have any just hope of christian salvation according to the gospel; and consequently, without the acknowledgment of the articles, a person may lawfully be refused communion.

Here let me lay down this preliminary: That the fundamentals of religion, as I have proved before, are very different in different ages and nations, according to the different degrees of revelation, and different advantages for knowing the truth: But ever since the time that the canon of scripture was finished, and where this canon is published and acknowledged, we may say in general, and with regard to church communion, that the fundamentals of christianity are the same to this day; especially in such places of Great Britain, Ireland, &c. where persons enjoy so great degrees of advantage for obtaining christian knowledge. What gracious allowances for want of capacity, or for want of means, in dark *corners of* England, or in India, God

will make hereafter, is not my business to enquire into; but certainly, we are to admit none to christian communion who have not the knowledge that is essential to christianity. And though we cannot precisely reckon up the certain number of essential or fundamental articles, yet we may lay down such characters of them, as may assist and regulate the affairs of christian communion.

SECT. II. We may begin therefore with negatives, and may boldly say, those cannot be fundamentals either of faith or practice, which are not very clearly revealed, either in express words, or in very plain, easy, and obvious consequences; they must be such as the meanest christian may be able to find by reading his bible, with sincere desire of truth, with holy diligence, and with humble prayer: *For the way of holiness* and salvation is so plain, *that fools shall not err therein;* Is. xxxv. 8. which may be explained by that text, 1 Cor. i. 26, 27. *Not many wise are called, but the foolish things of this world,* &c. Those again cannot be fundamental which are only to be found in such verses of scripture, the authority whereof may have been any ways dubious or reasonably suspected. For fundamentals must have the strongest authority, as well as the plainest evidence, and that for the same reason. Upon this account, I would never call that a fundamental, which is not mentioned but in one single text of scripture; for it is possible, that such a single text might be contested by critics, or transcribed false, by the neglect or iniquity of men, or be falsely translated, either by ignorance or design. Fundamentals must be revealed in several parts of the bible, and appear to be the frequent design and subject of the holy writers; that so the faith and salvation of plain christians might be secured against the danger of fatal mistakes, and the subtilty of critics, or cunning deceivers. Such articles also can never be fundamental, as have no necessary influence on the honour of God, the good of our neighbour, or our own holiness and final salvation, for since the honour of God, and the good of men, is the very end of the gospel, that can never be an essential part of it, without which, these ends may be happily and gloriously attained.

SECT. III. The plain and positive characters of true fundamental articles in christian religion, seem to be such as these: 1. Those without which there can be no religion: Such as, that there is a God; that this God is to be worshipped, believed, and obeyed; that he governs man in this life in order to a final judgment; that there is a future state; and rewards and punishments hereafter, according to our different behaviours here.

2. Those also seem to be essential, necessary, and fundamental articles of the christian religion, which are the chief points that raise it above natural, or distinguish it from the *Jewish religion,* and which are represented in scripture as the

very foundation and substance, the mystery and glory, of the gospel; such are these:

"That all mankind are sinners; are destitute of holiness and happiness; and sinful man cannot recover himself to the favour and image of God; and there is no way of access to God for him but by a Mediator." John xiv. 6. *No man cometh to the Father but by me:* And I take this doctrine of the necessity and use of a Mediator, to be the ground-work of the difference betwixt natural and revealed religion.

"That this Mediator is *the Son of God dwelling in flesh;* or, that the Son of God has taken upon him human nature for this very end, to become a Mediator:" This seems to be properly *the great mystery of the gospel,* and it should be acknowledged *without controversy, that God was manifest in the flesh;* 1 Tim. iii. 16.

"That Jesus of Nazareth is this glorious Person, this only Mediator. *There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ;*" 1 Tim. ii. 5. *If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins;* John viii. 24.

"That in order to the salvation of man, Christ is appointed by the Father to instruct us, as a teacher or prophet; to make an atonement for our sins, and to intercede for us as a priest; and to give us laws, and rule and judge us as our Lord and king:" For he has given us most frequent, plain, and express notices in his word, that this is the way whereby he saves us; and if we know not so much as this of the method of his salvation, how can we apply to him for it, or receive it at his hands with any degree of faith?

"That the Lord Jesus Christ is to be believed, trusted in, received, and submitted to, under these several characters which he sustains, by all that would partake of this salvation:" For if he be absolutely rejected in either of these his offices, we have no reason to expect him to fulfil any part of his salvation to us, or in us. *If we refuse him that speaketh from heaven* as our prophet, we cannot escape; Heb. xii. 25. If we utterly reject his proper sacrifice as a priest, *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation;* Heb. 26, 27. And if we refuse this man as a king *to reign over us,* we shall be slain before his face; Luke xix. 27. *He will take vengeance on them that obey not his gospel;* 2 Thess. i. 8.

"That God forgives repenting sinners, and is reconciled to them, not for the merit of their repentances, but for the sake of what Jesus Christ had done and suffered. This is a very evident consequent from the former doctrines, and has a plain and necessary connexion with them. It seems to be the very substance of the gospel, that *we are justified* or saved, *not by our own*

works, but by the grace of God abounding to sinners, *through the redemption* which our Lord Jesus Christ hath obtained; and that Jesus Christ *redeemed us from the curse*, by bearing *that curse for us*; and that God is at peace with us for his sake; that the gospel is *the word of reconciliation; that God was in Christ, reconciling* sinners *to himself*; because *he that knew no sin, was made sin*, or a sin-offering, *for us, that we*, who are sinners, *might be made righteous*, and accepted of God, *through him*; 2 Cor. v. 18—21. See Rom. iii. 20—25. Ephes. ii. 8, 9. and many other places.

"That though we cannot obtain the favour of God and eternal life by the merit of our own good works, yet faith in Christ, repentance of all sin, and holiness of heart and life, are necessary, in order to our enjoyment of the final salvation." The scripture is most expressive and positive in such sort of articles. *He that believeth not shall be damned*; Mark xvi. 16. *Except ye repent ye shall perish*; Luke xiii. 3, 5. *And without holiness no man shall see the Lord*; Heb. xii. 14. Now by this article we are bound to resist all temptations, to strive against and subdue all sinful appetites and inclinations, and to practise all known duties of fear, faith, love and worship, towards God; and justice, faithfulness, and kindness, toward men.

"That the Holy Spirit of God is appointed and given to bless men with wisdom and spiritual understanding, to assist them to accept of this salvation of Christ, to sanctify them here, and fit them for the full enjoyment of it hereafter: For since the canon of scripture is completed, there is a number of such express attestations therein, to the enlightening and sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit, that he who utterly and in all senses denies them, seems to deny that there is any thing for the blessed Spirit to do amongst men, since the day of miracles was ended. Now since the gift of the Spirit is one of the most glorious and promised blessings of the gospel, a considerable part of the gospel seems to me to consist in the operations of the Holy Spirit; and in this sense, he that denies the Holy Spirit, seems to refuse a glorious part of the appointed salvation. Let it be considered also, that *we are baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*: And is it not necessary that we should have some general knowledge and idea who this Father, Son, and Spirit are, and what is their distinct concern and business in matters of our salvation, together with their divine all-sufficiency to perform it?

The Ephesians, who had *never heard of a Holy Ghost*, and were baptized only in the baptism of John, might be true believers without this knowledge; Acts xix. 2, 3. But since we have had such abundant discoveries of him, and are baptized into his name, the case is much altered. How can we accept

adult baptism, or confirm that which we passed through in infancy, at our coming into a church, if we know nothing of the Holy Spirit, nor the use of him in our religion? It might also be added, as a further argument on this head, that *the communion of the Holy Ghost* is the great gospel-benediction, joined with the *love of God, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ*; as in 2 Cor. xiii. 14. So that our initiation into christianity being solemnized in the name of *Father, Son, and Holy Spirit*, our christian life and state being maintained by their distinct offices or transactions therein, and our hope of happiness depending on their divine benediction, we may reasonably infer, that some knowledge and faith of the blessed Trinity are necessary to christian salvation.

"That there shall be a resurrection of the body is another such article; *for if the dead rise not, then is not Christ risen; and if Christ be not risen, your faith is in vain, ye are yet in your sins,*" 1 Cor. xv. 16, 17. However this might be doubted by some Corinthians before this epistle was written, yet it cannot safely be doubted now.

"That there is a state of happiness hereafter prepared for saints where Jesus Christ is;" John xiv. 3. and those that "refuse his gospel *shall be punished from the presence of the Lord with everlasting destruction;* 2 Thess. i. 9. These seem to be necessary motives to work upon our hope and fear, and without which the gospel could hardly be supposed to be received amongst men; and therefore I count them necessary and fundamental articles of christianity. Thus I have attempted to give some instances of such doctrines as seem to be necessary to a christian profession, according to the second character of fundamentals; viz. "such as raise it above natural religion, and distinguish it from Judaism, &c. and are represented in scripture as the foundation, the substance, and the glory of the gospel."

3. A third character by which several fundamentals may be known, is this: "These doctrines or duties that are expressly made necessary to salvation in the word of God, are certainly fundamentals:" Though the greatest part of these are such as are either necessary to all religion under the first head, or are some of the most distinguishing doctrines of the christian religion under the second head; as, *he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him;* Heb. xi. 6. *That Jesus Christ is the only way to the Father;* John xiv. 6. *No man cometh to the Father but by me. That Jesus is the Christ: Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son: Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father;* 1 John ii. 22, 23.

The duties of believing in Christ, mortification of sins of

the flesh, and perseverance in faith and holiness, I esteem fundamental and necessary duties; because the scripture expressly saith, *he that believeth not shall be damned;* Mark xvi. 16. *If ye live after the flesh ye shall die;* Rom. vii. 13. *If any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him;* Heb. x. 38. And for the same reason this error, that justification is to be attained by the works of the law, seems to be an heresy, or fundamental error; because the scripture saith, *Christ is become of none effect to you, whosoever of you will be justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace;* Gal. v. 4. By which we are to understand such a hope of justification by the law, as made the sacrifice and atonement of Christ needless; and which was most probably the sense of the heretics in that day.

Sect. IV. But here I desire my readers to take notice of these five things:

1. That I have by no means pretended to reckon up all the fundamental articles, or give a full or regular catalogue of them: There may be some which I have omitted, and some which I have mentioned twice, and that are included in each other. I have only laid down some general tokens or marks, whereby necessary truths and duties may be known, so far as the terms of christian communion are concerned therein.

2. I have here joined several doctrinal and practical articles together, supposing that all those duties which the scripture makes necessary to be practised, are necessary also to be known in order to practise.

3. I call these articles fundamental; and it is my opinion they may be insisted on as necessary to communion, because they seem to me necessary to true christianity, in such an age and land of light as ours is. Yet, what I hinted before I repeat now, that, as I will not judge all the heathen world, and condemn them for want of christian knowledge, so neither will I utterly condemn every poor soul in the obscurest corners of a christian nation, for want of such degrees of knowledge as to me seems necessary to salvation, to all that know and read the New Testament. I grant, that God, in his word, does not seem to give encouragement to their hope of heaven, nor allow their communion with christians on earth: But the final condemnation of them is alone with him. And after all that we can say, every person must judge for himself, which articles are necessary in order to his own salvation; and every church must judge for itself, to regulate its own communion; and God alone is a superior judge with regard to the one or the other.

4. I do not think every one of these articles necessary to be expressly insisted on, and professed by every communicant; but so many only as the church shall think necessary, in order to give them a reasonable satisfaction that he knows and believes the rest.

5. Though I esteem it necessary that every communicant make known his belief of such articles as the church judges fundamental and necessary some way or other, yet I am far from confining him to any proposed human forms of expression; as I shall shew under the next question.

SECT. V. I proceed now to the second sort of knowledge that is necessary to christian communion; and that is, a "knowledge of all those things that are necessarily implied in the enjoyment or practice of this communion;" or, in short, thus: We must know what communion is, and how to communicate, before we can practise this duty. This sort of knowledge includes these particulars: 1. If I should say it is necessary to be baptized before we communicate at the Lord's-table, I should have far the greatest part of christians on my side; and if baptism be necessary, it is necessary also to know the nature of baptism, the end and design of baptism, the meaning of being baptized *in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit*, and the manner of performing it, whether it must be done by dipping or sprinkling, or whether both be not lawful, and whether baptism in infancy be sufficient. 2. It is necessary also, that a person should know what is the nature of *the Lord's-supper;* that it is to be performed by breaking of bread, and distributing that and the wine amongst a christian assembly; that the bread and wine are both to be blessed, and what is the nature of that blessing; what the bread and wine represent; what is the design of breaking and distributing them; who are the persons that must do this: And a woman must know, whether women are to be admitted to the Lord's-supper. 3. That several persons, who make a credible profession of christianity, must agree to meet together for christian worship, at the same time, and in the same place, in order to celebrate this ordinance; and that it is not to be received alone, because it is an ordinance of communion.

Without a knowledge of these things, I do not see how any person can communicate in the sacred and special ordinances of the gospel in an orderly manner, or with spiritual profit. Thus have I endeavoured to open the way for persons to form their judgment upon this difficult and important question, what are those "articles of the christian religion, the knowledge of which is necessary to communion;" and I hope I have kept the middle way between a libertinism of principles, and a narrow uncharitable spirit: Wherein if I have failed, I shall be glad to be set right in a spirit of meekness.

QUEST. VIII.—*In what Words and Expressions must our Faith be professed, in Order to Communion? And in what Manner must we profess it?*

SECT. I. This has been a famous and notable question in all ages of the church. National churches, synods, assemblies or councils of bishops, presbyters, and learned men, have established certain sets of fundamental articles and express forms of confession; and by these forms persons are to be tried, that desire admission to their communion. Others, who have thought this yoke and burden imposed upon the conscience too heavy and intolerable, have maintained, that no forms of confession are necessary, besides the very words of scripture; and that he who agrees to these words, has a right to christian communion, though perhaps he may understand or explain them in a sense never so different from the church, whose communion he desires. Now to speak my own sentiment with freedom here, I think these are two extremes; and the best medium that I can find for all the purposes of peace and truth is, that every man should confess his faith in his own words, which I shall endeavour to make evident by a particular review of each method.

I grant that it seems a very natural and plausible argument, that since God has written down all needful christian truths and duties in the holy scripture, we can chuse no better words to confess them in, than those which God himself has given us for our instruction in those truths and duties: But if we consider the affairs of the christian world, the experience of mankind, the practice of heretics and deceivers, as well as the reason of things, we shall find that though the words of scripture are sufficient to teach us all the necessary parts of christianity, yet the mere repetition of them, or subscription to them, cannot give sufficient proof, that the person so professing, has any understanding of them; or has any true christian knowledge. An ideot, or an idle boy, may learn twenty of the noblest and most comprehensive sentences of scripture without book; a very ignorant person, or a man of most erroneous and destructive principles may repeat any words of scripture, and profess to believe them, while the one has a quite contrary meaning under those words, and the others have no meaning at all. Now surely such sort of professions can never be counted a sufficient evidence of christian knowledge, and consequently can never give him a right to the holy communion. But because this point is of great importance, I shall debate it at large as a distinct question by itself.

SECT. II. It will be replied then immediately, "If the words of scripture are not a sufficient test in this case, may not confessions of faith, drawn up by wise and good men, be made a test of christian knowledge?" I answer, no, by no means; and that for these three reasons: It will admit such as ought not to be

admitted, it will exclude such as ought not to be excluded, and it will endanger or infringe christian liberty.

Reason I. This may admit such persons as ought not to be admitted; for such forms of doctrine, drawn up by other men, will be liable to the same inconveniences that will attend any scriptural form of words: A child, or an ideot, may learn and repeat them by heart; a very ignorant person, or one who is very erroneous, may profess and subscribe them in his own sense: For when such forms have continued some time in the world, men of very heretical notions and tempers, being in danger of being excluded from the church by such a test, will contrive and find how to put some perverse sense upon the words, and thus evade the force, and disappoint the design of them, as they have done in all ages with the words of scripture.

Reason II. This may exclude such persons as ought not to be excluded: For if a person of a truly christian spirit, and of a pious and unblemished character should happen to differ from this form of human articles but in one sentence, or even in one word, he cannot honestly assent to, nor subscribe the whole form, though he is perfectly of the same mind in all things, except in that minute point; and yet for this little inconsiderable difference, he must be exeluded the communion of the church, and perhaps be liable to all the immediate inconveniences of such an exclusion, as much as if he denied every article. There are no synods, or councils of christian bishops or presbyters, even though the laity have been mingled with them, but have put into their articles and confessions some little party notions, as well as the great and necessary truths of the gospel. They have ever had an itch to determine some questions about meats, and days, and circumstances, and ceremonies, either in faith or worship, as well as the most undoubted and fundamental points of christianity. Mint, and anise, and cummin, have been ever creeping into confessions of faith among the weightier matters of faith and love. Now if subscribing to a whole set of articles be the test of communion, then for not eating flesh or herbs, or for want of the anise and the cummin, a man is excluded the church as much as if he wanted faith and love; which is a most unreasonable thing, and would directly contradict that great canon of the apostle; Rom. xiv. 1. *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations.*

Reason III. It will endanger or infringe christian liberty. The imposition of human forms of profession has been a heavy burden and sore bondage, under which most parts of the christian church have groaned in almost every age. It has been a sore temptation to many thousands to strain and subdue those words to new significations, to various and very foreign senses, in order to bend their consciences to a compliance with them; and

it has oftentimes been made a hateful engine and instrument of quarrels and schisms, of reproaches and sharp persecutions to many sincere and honest souls, that could not warp their sincerity, nor subdue their consciences to such a compliance. Whence arises the severity of the inquisition in Spain and Portugal, and the compliances of the Jews there, to profess the Roman faith? It is true, no human method is perfectly free from all inconveniences, yet I would not willingly encourage such a method which has often had such mischievous and impious effects, and has always such danger attending it. Yet I am very much of the mind that articles of religion, confessions, catechisms, and short summaries of the christian faith, are very useful and necessary amongst the churches of Christ for several reasons: and particularly,

1. "To give a short and compendious view of the chief and most necessary points of the christian religion, which lie scattered up and down in many distant places of scripture:" And for this reason, such books are very profitable for all christian families, to teach the young and the ignorant the sum and substance of what they must believe and practise in order to salvation; for though every thing necessary be plainly contained in the word of God, yet persons that have little time, and little knowledge, and very weak reason, would be at a great loss to collect all their faith and duty from so large a book as the bible is, without some teacher. They would want some instructor, who might lay these things together in an easy method, or some systems, confessions, or catechisms, wherein it is done already. Though these catechisms and confessions should be examined by the word of God, so far as every person is capable, and should be no farther received than they bear a conformity thereto by all that are capable of such examination.

2. Such articles, or summaries of the christian religion, are useful "to hold forth to the world what are in general the sentiments of such a particular church, or churches:" And this is proper on many accounts, so it is of use in order to make the way to their communion evident and easy, and that other christians may know whether they agree with them in what is essential to christianity, and may judge whether they should seek or desire constant or occasional communion with them; and that other churches may judge whether they should admit their members to communion: This also may tend to encourage more zealous and hearty consultations, and mutual assistances towards the support of their common christianity, provided that these articles are drawn up with judgment; and these things are managed with prudence and charity.

Such are, or should be, the articles of the church of England, which proclaim her doctrine and discipline to the world:

Such are, or should be, the Westminster assembly's confession of faith, or that of the Savoy, and the two catechisms, which shew the faith and worship of the English dissenters: Such are, or should be, the confessions of the foreign reformed churches; of all which it may be said in general, they are very good summaries of the christian religion, however they may differ in lesser points and circumstances. All these have been unspeakable advantages in the churches of Christ, not only to train up children and families in the knowledge of divine truths, but to hold forth to all the world upon what foundations the protestant churches are built, and to declare what their faith is, and what their practice. I would not be understood, as though I thought such confessions of faith necessary to be drawn up and kept in all churches for these ends; for many of the primitive churches for a hundred years or more, managed their affairs without any such formal confessions, at least without any so large ones, generally approved and delivered down to posterity. The constant preaching and praying in the churches, and mutual communication of christians, did notify to their fellow-christians and fellow-churches, their consent in the most necessary and important articles of faith and worship. But it is certain, that since churches are more multiplied, and errors more abundantly increased, there are many expediences that attend such a declared and public consent, or harmony of several churches, in the same general points of doctrine and duty.

I grant that there have been some great inconveniences attending these national confessions and articles, such as the nailing down certain degrees of reformation to everlasting imperfection, and the settling some mistakes for whole nations and future ages; we in Great Britain need not run far to seek for instances of this, whether we dwell in the north or south part of it. But these inconveniences may be avoided, if we and our fathers had but observed two things:-1. That such articles need not be drawn up in the strictest terms of any particular party, but with allowance of some just degrees of latitude for different sentiments; nor let such articles descend into a determination of too many particulars in things that are of little moment in christianity; and 2. I would have it always secured, that this precise form of words be never imposed on any person whatsoever as a test of christianity, of communion, of ordination, &c. to be subscribed or acknowledged by assent or consent; at least it ought never to be done without the allowance of such limitations, explications, and exceptions which might secure the consciences of pious christians from all unnecessary bonds and fetters.

Sect. III.—The only way therefore that I know of to secure the just christian liberty, both of churches and persons, is this, That every person who proposes himself to communion must

confess his faith in his own words; or by an open and friendly conference with the ministers, officers, or deputed persons of the church, he must give them satisfaction in what sense he understands the holy scriptures, in momentous and fundamental points: and make it appear that he knows and believes all the necessary articles of christianity: And, as I said before, they must take heed not to make more articles necessary than Christ has done by the rule of his word, and they should acknowledge themselves satisfied with such a profession, as may be sufficient to manifest a person to be a good christian, without descending into nice particularities of opinion, and points of less importance. Whether persons of divided sentiments in lesser matters should be received to fixed or to occasional communion only, shall be discussed afterward. Where there is any just ground of suspicion that a person holds such errors, as in the opinion of the church are exceeding dangerous, if not damnable, there surely the church has a right to require that he declare himself free from those errors, and give his sense of scripture in opposition to them, so far as to give satisfaction to the church: But he is not bound to do it in any form of words proposed to him, or imposed upon him by others, but only in words of his own chusing; because the design of their enquiry, and of his confession, is to profess his own sense of scripture, or his own faith, and not theirs: And the church must afterward judge, whether the declared sense of the proposed communicant, or candidate, agree with their sense, sufficient for communion in the special ordinances of the gospel.

Hereby the truth and extent of a man's own knowledge is much better found out, than by any form of words whatsoever, human or divine, that can be proposed to him for assent or subscription. Hereby the liberty of the person desiring communion is secured from impositions, in that he is not confined to any set of words, but has the whole range of his mother-tongue to tell what he believes, and to express his own sense of scripture. Hereby the church also has its full liberty of judging the character and profession of the person admitted to their communion, whether he believe the words of scripture in such a sense, as the church thinks necessary to salvation, and sufficient for practising and enjoying this sacred fellowship. This is the way to deal with others, as we would think it reasonable others should deal with us, according to the rule of our blessed Saviour. This is acting according to the professed protestant principle, not to impose on the conscience of others, but to let every one judge for himself concerning his own personal actions, and let the church judge for itself concerning its social actions. Thus by the influence of the blessed Spirit, which is a Spirit of truth and peace, christians may walk together by this rule, to the glory of God and their own edification; and peace and truth may be honourably maintained, so far as we are capable in this imperfect state.

SECT. IV. An enquiry may arise here, "Whether a confession of faith in writing may not serve the same purposes, as a conference?"

It is my judgment that no confessions of faith, delivered in writing, can be sufficient to give evidence of christian knowledge, except there has been some personal conference before or after the writing of this confession, whereby it may appear that the person well understands what he has written; or at least, unless there be some other very evident and convincing proofs that the person who writes it is truly sincere, and would not dare to impose upon a church, by any written confession, that which is not the real belief and sense both of head and heart. And by this means that scandal and reproach will be taken away from the churches, of receiving members merely upon a written confession of faith and hope, which perhaps was drawn up by some other hand, and which has neither been the work of the head, nor heart of the person who desires communion.

QUEST. IX.—*Where the Seclusion from Christian Communion carries temporal Inconveniences with it, hath a particular Church the power to seclude a Person merely for want of Orthodoxy?*

SECT. I. Since I have put the test of knowledge sufficient for christian communion upon the final judgment of the church, and their satisfaction in the orthodoxy of a communicant, it is necessary I should answer this great objection, viz. Suppose a socinian, a professed pelagian, or an antinomian of the grossest kind, should declare that he has been very sincere in searching the scriptures to find the truth, should he be secluded from communion, because he doth not appear in his confession orthodox enough to satisfy the church? And is it not somewhat like persecution, when being rejected by the church he shall lie under some reproach, and sustain temporal damage in his reputation among his neighbours.

ANSW. I. It is certain that persons who give not just evidence of true christianity, ought not to be received to the special ordinances of christian worship, and enjoy christian communion: Now those who believe not the necessary, fundamental, and essential doctrines of the christian religion cannot properly be called true christians, whatsoever general profession they may make of believing the bible, or being the disciples of Christ: Therefore such are not to be received. A man may profess to be very sincere in searching the scriptures to find out truth; but of real inward sincerity, as well as inward christianity, God only is the judge; and how valuable a qualification soever sincerity may

be, if it could be found in any persons in England, who are not true christians, and how far soever it may go towards acceptance with God in the secret of his mercy, yet it is not the profession of sincerity, but of christianity, that gives a person a right to the fellowship of a christian church: For God in his revealed word has not bid us receive all that are sincere, but all that believe or *have received Christ*, or all that profess to be true christians. And in this case I know no judge on earth superior to the church, with which communion is desired, and the officers thereof. These must determine whether the profession of christianity be credible, or no, as I have proved before under the second question.

Answ. II, Those temporal inconveniences that a man may happen to sustain among his neigbours, by being excluded from a particular church for want of true faith, are no part of that church's act in refusing him, not a necessary consequent thereof; but only a mere occasional or accidental inconvenience, to which all human affairs are subject in this imperfect state. Now this is evident, because in a heathen nation the rejection of a person from a christian church for want of such faith would be honourable, and his neighbours would like him the better for it; though it happens in a christian nation that his neighbours may reproach him; but still this event is no part of the church's act, who ought to love him as a man, and do all due offices of kindness to him, even while they cannot receive him as a true christian.

Answ. III. Though we are not to do the least hurt to any person because he doth not hold the christian faith, yet we are allowed and encouraged to love good christians better than those that are not so: We are commanded to *love our enemies and do good to them that hate us*; Mat. v. 44. but we are told, Mat. x. 41, 42. *that he that doth the least benefit to a prophet or disciple*, as such, *shall have a peculiar reward*. We are in a special manner required to *love the brotherhood;* 1 Pet. ii. 17. *to love one another;* John xv, 12, 17. *and to do good to all, but especially to the household of faith*; Gal. vi. 10. Nor can the withholding that degree of love from an heathen, which belongs to a pious christian be justly called persecution or hardship, any more than my neighbour may complain that I persecute him, because I do not love him so well as my brother or my father.

Give me leave to add in this place, that though the temporal inconveniences of shame or disreputation is not the necessary consequent of an exclusion from a church for want of faith, yet these inconveniences may certainly and justly attend the exclusion of a person for want of good morals. And St. Paul plainly intimates it; 1 Cor. v. 9, 10, 11. where he permits them to *keep company with* heathen *fornicators, extortioners, or idolaters, and to eat with them if they* are invited; chapter x. verse

27. But he forbids them to allow the same degree of civility to *a fornicator, extortioner, or idolater who calls himself a brother* or a christian; *with such a one*, he says, *we should keep no company*, not so much as *to eat with him*. So in 2 Thess. iii. 6, 11, 14. concerning *disorderly* christians and *busy-bodies that will not work* to maintain themselves, the apostle says, *withdraw yourselves from every such brother*, which may signify a withdrawment from spiritual or from civil communion with him, or perhaps include both. He forbids the Thessalonians to have *any company with him, that he may be ashamed*; 2 Thess. iii. 14. and the reason seems to be this: These practices are justly accounted shameful by the light of nature, and among the heathens; now when a man professes so holy a religion as christianity is, and yet practises these shameful vices, he is guilty of a double crime, and aggravates his iniquity; he is a hypocrite and a deceiver as well as a vicious man, and the apostle exhorts the church to make him know and feel the shame of it.

Sect. II. Another objection a-kin to the former, seems naturally to rise here, and to want an answer too, viz. Suppose a man be a real and hearty christian, holding all the necessary articles of the christian faith, and he proposes himself to communion with a church of narrow and uncharitable principles, who make more fundamentals than Christ has made, shall such a man be excluded from communion, merely for want of orthodoxy in the judgment of an unskilful church?

Answ. Without doubt it is a criminal thing in any assembly, or church of Christ, to imagine and create new fundamentals, and impose them upon others, or to establish narrow and uncharitable rules of communion; yet it is possible that such a church may act in the sincerity of their hearts, for the honour of Christ, and the purity of his ordinances; many such churches there have been in our age, and more in the age of our fathers; and though it be faulty in them to exclude true christians, yet they must still be the visible judges of the fitness of persons for their own visible communion, and they are accountable for their conduct only to Christ, their supreme Lord and judge.

It is better, in my opinion, therefore, that a person who is a real christian, should join himself to some other distant church, though it may be with some inconvenience; or perhaps it may be better that he should live without ordinances of special communion, which are not absolutely necessary to salvation, than that he should break the settled peace of a church, which walks with God in faith, and holiness, and comfort, though their principles of communion may be a little too narrow and uncharitable, and not to be vindicated. No man ought to come into a voluntary society, and become a member thereof, without the consent of the society, though perhaps they unjustly refuse to give their consent. They

must answer it to Christ, their judge, at the great day. There is nothing in this world perfectly free from all inconveniences; prudence and christianity ever direct us, of two evils to chuse the least.

QUEST. X.—*Whether a Profession to believe the express Words of Scripture, without any Explication, be an Evidence of Knowledge sufficient for Christian Communion?*

SECT. I. Though what I have already said under the former questions, might be sufficient to answer the present enquiry, yet since in several ages of the church, and especially in times of rising error this controversy has been moved, I shall spend some time in sifting it thoroughly, and endeavour to lead my reader to such a determination of it, as may give a just satisfaction to an honest and humble enquirer. By the express words of scripture, I here intend the words expressed in our English bible; or the original Greek and Hebrew words translated into some other English words; for it is evident, that the Greek and Hebrew can be of no use to admit plain christians into English churches. When I say without any explication, I mean, without explaining the sense of those scriptural words so translated, by other words or phrases; also without any manner of influence or consequence drawn from those words, though it lie never so plain and open. Without explication signifies, where the person proposing himself to communion assents to the words of scripture, but refuses to explain in what sense he understands those words; and neither will own or deny any other articles or propositions that may be offered him as terms of communion, though deduced from the words of scripture with never so much evidence; nor will confess his faith, even in the most important and necessary points, in any other words but those of his bible. When I mention knowledge sufficient for christian communion, it is not to be understood, as if knowledge were the only thing necessary: for in order to christian communion, there is also required *a professed subjection* to all the known duties of christianity, and a conversation answerable to this profession: But the present enquiry is, whether the express words of scripture are a sufficient test of that knowledge, which is one requisite to communion.

Now let the question be proposed in the fullest and fairest manner thus: Whether a person's professing to believe the English bible itself, or subscribing, assenting to, or repeating any form of words expressly taken out of any English translation, without any manner of explication or inference, can be an evidence of christian knowledge, sufficient to demand admission *to the* Lord's-supper, with a christian church in England."

Those that assert the affirmative in this question, are of wo sorts; either persons that have entertained some sentiments ı the important points of christianity different from the common ıith of the churches, and would shelter those opinions under ıe express words of scripture, though they explain them in ıeir own sense: or they are persons that heartily maintain the ommon faith, but through an unlimited excess of charity are fraid of narrowing the terms of christian communion, lest they ıould exclude some sincere christians out of the church; they re jealous of losing their christian liberty, and are afraid of aving conscience oppressed by an imposition of any confessions f faith, or articles of communion, drawn up in the words of. llible men.

Those that hold the negative in this question are also of two orts; either such as have a narrow and uncharitable spirit, and efuse their communion to all christians that will not assent, conent, or subscribe to every word and expression contained in ıeir articles, confessions, and human forms; or they are such s maintain a just and reasonable charity towards all that they an hope to be sincere christians, and dare not exclude any perons duly qualified from the holy communion: They would also ecure christian liberty in the full extent that Christ has given it) his people; but they are zealous *for the faith once delivered) the saints*, for the purity of the gospel, for the honour of Christ in his churches, and the true profit and pleasure of hristian communion in holy ordinances; nor would they wilingly indulge such an excessive complaisance instead of charity, nd such a licentious freedom of opinions in their community, s would tend to the destruction of all that is valuable in the ommunion of the churches of Christ.

I must confess myself at present to stand on the negative ide, and I hope I may rank myself among the latter sort of hem. I cannot yet persuade myself that a mere assent to the rords of scripture, without any explication, is a sufficient rule y which churches should judge of their communicant's knowedge; and the reasons that influence and constrain me to be of his mind, I shall lay down at large in the following sections; et I shall endeavour to shew in the end of my discourse, how a ıst liberty may be secured, both to single christians and to hurches, and the sacred bonds of charity maintained, without a centious indulgence of all sort of heresies and errors in the ame church.

Sect. II. The first argument against the confinement of hurches, to express words of scripture in judging of the nowledge of their communicants, is this, "that the greatest nd best end that has ever been aimed at in this method, *ın never be attained by it.*" The greatest and best design of

it is to secure christians from all imposition of human forms, and from making confessions of faith drawn up in the words of fallible men, a test of knowledge in the things of God: But this method is no effectual security; for since the inspired words of Greek and Hebrew can be no test of knowledge in English churches, a confession must be made in words of English: Now all English words, into which the scripture is, or may be translated, are the words of fallible men; and no person can be infallibly sure in some difficult and controverted texts, that they do fully and truly express the sense of the sacred originals.

I grant here that for private christians to search their English bibles, and find the matters of their salvation, there is abundantly sufficient certainty of the truth of every translation in general, that it clearly declares all that is of such importance: Because whatsoever is necessary to salvation, is sufficiently contained and revealed, not in one or two, but in various texts of scripture, though perhaps not always in express words; and in most of these texts learned men generally agree about the mere translation of them: This need create no manner of scruple to sincere and humble christians in their own knowledge, faith and practice. The English bible is gloriously sufficient for the salvation of every humble christian in England. The English gospel has saved many thousands, without any skill or knowledge of other languages.

But in this controverted case, when men assert that a confession of express words of scripture shall be sufficient to purge any man from the charge of heresy, or give him a right to demand christian communion, even where his opinions are justly suspected, I must take notice here that some of these controverted and difficult texts may naturally come into question; such as those which seem to favour any heresies, and those which seem to guard against them. Now in such a case as this the mere translating of the words oftentimes determines the sense of them: the translation of such a text is a sort of interpretation of the meaning of it; and then, what translation of any particular text, shall be the standard of orthodoxy for all our churches? Shall that which is public and established by the magistrate have this honour? But who gave it this authority over all the churches? Man or God? Shall any private translation of learned and pious men met in council, determine the sense for all communions? But whence had they this power? Much less can the translation of any single person be a public standard. Wandering over all nations and churches, and surveying all the various pretences to such a power, I cannot find where to *fix the sole of* my foot, but on the only protestant principle, viz. "*That as each* person with regard to his own conduct in sacred

things, must judge of the sense of scripture for himself, using the best helps of translators and expositors that he can obtain: so each community using the same helps, must judge for themselves of the sense of the word of God, with regard to their conduct in admitting persons to partake of sacred ordinances among them." Therefore that particular church whose communion is desired, must determine whether any human words, in which a persons faith is confessed, are orthodox in their sense, or no; whether they do truly answer the end of such a confession or no; and include the necessary articles of the christian faith; and whether they give sufficient evidence of a man's knowledge in christianity, in order to admit him to their communion.

Suppose a modern Socinian, or a more orthodox man, should refuse the common English translation of the first chapter of St. John's gospel, and confess his faith in words of his own translation thus: "In the beginning was reason, and reason was with God, and reason was God:" Suppose an Athanasian refuses the English translation of Rev. iii. 14. where Christ is called "the beginning of the creation of God," and says αρχη ought to be translated the "head of God's creation," lest Christ be represented as a creature, and he will put this text into his confession of faith. Suppose an Arian, an Antinomian, an Anthropomorphite, a Pelagian, a Calvinist, each confess their faith in the words of scripture of their own translation; none of these English words, are in the strictest and properest sense, the words of God, but the words of fallible men; and the particular church whose communion is sought must necessarily interpose with their own sense of scripture, according to the best advantages they have: They must interpose, I say, so far as to judge, whether any of these persons have so interpreted those controverted texts, in which each chuses to confess his faith, as to express aright what they believe to be the necessary articles of christianity; and though there be no necessity, that a church and its members should agree in the sense of every text, yet there must be finally such a sense of some scriptures, given or assented to by the person desiring communion, as may satisfy that church that he has knowledge sufficient for it. Now this may be done without an imposition of any set human forms of words, as I have shewn before.

Sect. III. My second argument is this: To make a mere confession of express words of scripture a sufficient test of knowledge to demand christian communion, denies that liberty to some christians, which it indulges to others; nay, it denies the same liberty to a whole community of christians, or to their ministers, which it indulges to each catechumen, or to every single person that offers himself to their communion. I

make it appear thus: Each single person that offers himself communion with a particular church, has liberty given him this rule, to put his own sense on the commands of Christ demanding of communion; but the ministers or members this church, are not allowed this liberty to put their own sen on the commands of Christ about receiving him. Perhaps th know by discourse and conversation, that this person den some articles of the christian faith which they think necessar while he confesses the words of scripture, and abuses the to a pernicious sense; yet he has liberty to impose hims on their communion, because he thinks he is fit for it in h own sense of scripture; but they cannot, according to th rule reject him, though in their sense of scripture they thin him unfit.

According to his own interpretation of the bible, he say he owns all the fundamental articles: According to their inte pretation, they say, he denies some of them; yet this test ope the door of admission to him, whensoever he demands entran and does not permit them to shut it. They believe the scriptu forbids them to receive such to christian fellowship, who have n received the christian faith, yet this rule allows them not to fo bid him their fellowship, though they think he denies the fai in some necessary parts of it. They think, according to the sense of the word of God, that he has no appearing right to th kingdom of heaven, and consequently that he has no right enter into the church or kingdom of Christ on earth; but ac cording to this rule they are bound to admit him, even contra to their own sentiments and consciences. He has liberty to d mand, but they have none to refuse. This seems to me like restraint of the liberty of a multitude of professed christians, secure or indulge the liberty of a catechumen, which is far fro impartial justice, in the very nature of things. Now certain Christ would never impose such a rule of communion on h churches, which should not be reconcileable to common justic and to that great and general rule of his, *do to others as yo would have others do to you.*

Sect. IV. My third argument is this: That a child, ideot, or a very ignorant man, may repeat any short form confession, drawn up in the express words of scripture, and sa he believes it; or he may subscribe or assent to any longer form even the whole bible itself: But surely a child, an ideot, or a ignorant person who have not a real knowledge and under standing of the things of christianity, are not fit to be receive into a christian church, nor admitted to the Lord's-suppe There is no formal repetition of a few words by memory, ca give any proof of christian knowledge in the heart; no asse or subscription to a book, as big as the bible, can make it evide

that a man understands five lines of it: Yet if this be the proper test, such ignorant creatures must be received to the noblest and highest ordinances of Christ upon earth. Suppose a poor wretch that wants bread, and knows almost nothing of christianity, hears that such a congregation maintain their poor well, and in order to secure a good maintenance, he gets a few scripture expressions on the most important points without book; his life has been obscure, unknown, and, so far as appears, not any way scandalous; he proposes himself to communion with this church, he repeats the creed, or, if he be desired to make a larger confession, he takes up his bible and says, "I believe every word that is contained between these two leathern covers to be true; and I resolve to live according to it." This poor wretch may demand admission according to such principles.

If you say, there must be some enquiry made, whether he understands the words of scripture, or no, then there must be some determined sense put upon those words of scripture as proposed by the church, or as assented to by the communicant; and thereby you depart from your pretended rule, that the express words of scripture are a sufficient test of knowledge. I grant, that after the utmost search and enquiry into christian profession, and piety of conversation, some hypocrites will creep into the best-ordered and purest churches; human affairs are so constituted: We cannot know the hearts of men: *Tares and wheat must grow together till harvest:* But it is sufficiently plain in scripture, that they ought not to admit those to christian communion, who understand not the first principles of christianity; and therefore we ought to seek some satisfactory evidence of a thing that may so easily be found, viz. christian knowledge, and not bind ourselves to such a rule of admission as can give no evidence, whether a communicant has christian knowledge, or no.

I might add under this argument also, that as a child, an idiot, or a person ignorant, or a heathen may claim communion according to this rule; so a child or a heathen is a sufficient judge who has knowledge enough to be admitted to the fellowship of a church of Christ; for a child, or a heathen, can tell whether the person proposing himself subscribes his bible, or no; whether he declares his general assent to all the scripture, or no; whether he repeats any express words of scripture aright, or

As there is no need of any real understanding in communicants upon this principle, so there is no need of any judgment or prudence in the churches of Christ, in order to receive them: no need of elders or governors, men of wisdom and discretion to use the keys of the church, where the door is so wide, that half the children in a parish may go into the church

at once; and it opens so easily, that a child or a fool can manage it.

SECT. V. A fourth argument against this test of communion is this: If a mere assent to the express words of scripture be a sufficient test of christian knowledge to claim admission into a church, this opens the door for an endless variety of different and contrary opinions, and practices, to enter into the same church; multitudes of heresies, that relate both to faith and practice, may swarm in the same communion; truth and errors fundamental, and not fundamental, will be mingled here; errors tolerable, and intolerable; extremely dangerous, if not damnable and destructive, will be admitted: For all that profess that in our age and day, in protestant nations, will subscribe to the bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice; nay, all persons that are not heathens, deists, Jews or Mahometans, may claim place in the churches of Christ. Now let us first recount some of those various doctrines that will hereby be encouraged in the same communion, and then consider what will be the inconveniences attending such a mixed community.

First, Let us recount the various doctrines and their professors, that will be encouraged in the same communion by this rule.

1. The *Anthropomorphites* say, that God hath proper parts, hands and feet, and eyes, and ears, and is really in the shape of a man, according to the express words of scripture taken in a plain literal sense. One of this opinion, as I am informed, lately proposed himself to christian communion.

2. The *Allegorists* on the other hand, explain in a metaphorical and figurative sense, whatsoever expressions they find in scripture, whose literal sense does not agree with their notions. Upon this principle some that deny the proper sacrifice and satisfaction of Christ say, that his atonement, redemption and sacrifice, are but figurative expressions. Others believe salvation to be obtained only through Jesus Christ, but they mean Christ, or the light within them.

3. The *Arians* say, that Jesus Christ was a mere creature, made out of nothing, before all other creatures, and superior to angels, endued with divine power, and called God, and that he assumed flesh without a human soul.

The *Sabellians* believe, that the blessed Trinity, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, doth by no means intend three proper distinct persons, but is a mere trinity of names and manifestations, modes and relations in the godhead or divine nature, and that the Son of God was not properly a person before his incarnation.

5. The *Socinians* derived from the old *Samosatenians* and *Photinians* say, that there is no such trinity of persons in the

divine nature, as the Athanasians, and the school-men maintain. That Jesus Christ is a mere man, and had no being before he was conceived of the blessed virgin. That Christ did not make any proper satisfaction for the sins of men. That the soul sleeps with the body, and rises with it at the resurrection; and after all, they acknowledge that the light of nature is sufficient to direct men to eternal happiness, and that nothing is to be believed in the sublimest points of religion, but what is to be understood and judged of by our reason.

6. *Enthusiasts*, on the other hand, believe that reason is of no use in things of religion. That human learning doth more hurt than good among christians. That there is no need at all of it for ministers of the gospel. That our own labour for our salvation signifies nothing, and therefore they wait for sensible impressions of the Holy Spirit, to move them to the common duties of christianity.

7. The *Pelagians* say, that there is no imputed or inherent original sin. That man after his fall, had a proper power and free will in himself to become truly pious, or grossly wicked; and to do either good or evil. That men may obtain the favour of God by the merit of their own good works.

8. *Arminians*, or *Remonstrants*, generally hold, that there is no certain and absolute election or redemption of particular persons unto salvation, that there is no need of the almighty, sovereign, and efficacious influences of the Spirit, in order to conversion. That believers may fall and perish eternally; and that there is no certain perseverance of the saints.

9. The *Antinomians* hold, that all true believers were justified from eternity. That an elect person is never chargeable with sin before God. That the moral law of God is not of perpetual obligation to the consciences of believers. That sin can do a believer no real injury.

10. The strict *Calvinists* deny every single proposition, and peculiar sentiment, that I have here mentioned under all the foregoing heads, and call them all errors; and believe the contrary propositions to be divine truths delivered in the scriptures.

I might here add a variety of doctrines and sects, that have in former ages troubled and divided the church, viz. the Eutychians, who supposed that the two natures of Christ were so united and blended together, that the human was lost in the divine. The Apollinarians, who taught that Christ brought his flesh from heaven, and that he had no human will, but only a divine will. The Donatists, who required the true church to be without sin or spot. The Origenists, who deny the eternal

punishment of sinners, and fancy the devils themselves shall a last be saved. I might further reckon up a long train of wil and unaccountable opinions which have no settled name, yet al arise from various senses, that the lusts, or the fancies, o humours, or mistakes of men, have put on the express word of scripture. But these are sufficient in this place. I would no be understood here to intend that every person, to whom any o these names may be affixed by men, believes or professes al the doctrines that are ranged under any of these heads: Al that I mean by this catalogue is this, that under these severa names in our general and common discourse, all these princi ples or propositions are usually comprehended and understood Note, I have not mentioned the papists, because they allow no the bible to be a perfect rule, but build part of their religion o human traditions, and the pretended infallible authority of thei church. But so many of all those sects of christians that I hav mentioned, as are found in our day, do all take the bible fo their perfect rule of faith and practice, and each of them wil subscribe the whole bible, at least in their own translation of it and profess to believe all the express words of scripture: Nov if any confession of express words of scripture, be a sufficie test of christian faith, all these persons have this qualificatio and cannot be denied christian communion in any churc to which they propose themselves, for want of true christia knowledge.

And now I would ask, what a wretched sort of commu nion is it, that could be maintained in such a church, of suc widely different opinions? What fellowship could they hav in hearing the same sermons, in joining in the same prayer and in all sacred offices? What holy harmony, what orde what peace or christian unity, can be carried on in such mixed and disagreeing multitude? But I insist no longer o this at present.

Sect. VI. In the prosecution of the fourth argument, come therefore in the next place to consider, what will be th inconveniences of making such a large and wide door to th church, and of encouraging such a promiscuous communion For though all these can never walk and worship together i any peace or order, yet all may be admitted on this foundatio One great inconvenience is this, viz. Some persons that den necessary fundamental truths and duties, without which *a ma cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*, may enter into a churc on earth, and claim christian communion by this rule of admi sion: For it may perhaps be doubted, whether all necessa particular articles, as well as general ones, are found in ex press words in the bible, which I shall afterwards have occasio *to enquire into.* But if all necessary articles were found the

expressly, yet the grossest heretics may consent to those expressions, and explain them only in a metaphorical sense: So the Socinians explain the expressions of scripture concerning the sacrifice and atonement of Christ, and make them all mere metaphors, to signify something of a much inferior nature: But be their explications, and their sense of scripture what it will, yet they may demand christian communion upon this principle, that they subscribe the bible, and every expression in it; though they explain the fundamental and essential articles of it quite away by figures and metaphors.

Indeed this has been the practice of heretics in all ages to run to this refuge, and make the words of scripture their hiding place and defence; having learned well from their subtle teachers, or their own cunning devices, to twist and turn the words of scripture by figures, and tropes, and distinctions, into their own pernicious sense; and this ever will be the practice of persons, grossly erroneous in the things of religion, that yet would appear to agree with the scripture, and hold the christian faith. They may tell you that Christ is their only hope of salvation, and their way to God the Father; but they mean a Christ within, or the remains of the light of reason, and the dictates of a natural conscience. They may assure you, they believe the resurrection of Christ from the dead; but they mean nothing but Christ within them, in the rising or awaking of the conscience from stupid inactive silence. They may assent that Christ is God, but mean only a metaphorical God, because he is made a king, or governor of the church. They may profess the whole scripture in their own sense, and in the mean time they may believe such contradictions as these, viz.

I believe *God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will*, Ephes. i. 11. Yet I believe, that the decrees of God are nothing else but immutable fate, and the necessary connexion of second causes, as Mr. Hobbs.

I believe that *God knoweth all his works from the beginning;* Acts xv. 18. Yet I believe, this foreknowledge is nothing else but a perfect sagacity of mind, and immediate contrivance to turn all things that happen to fulfil his own designs, as effectually as if he really foreknew. So a much better man than Mr. Hobbs has explained it.

I believe, that *in the beginning was the word, and the word was God;* John i. 1. Yet I believe that Jesus Christ had no being before he was conceived, and born of the virgin, and than truly and properly he is but a mere man.

I believe, that we must *flee fornication;* 1 Cor. vi. 18. but I believe, that nothing else is intended in all such texts but spiritual fornication, which is idolatry.

I believe, that we must "keep ourselves from idols," and

not practise idolatry; 1 John v. 21. Yet I believe that we may worship the true God, by idols or images; for the idolatry which is forbidden in the scripture, signifies only the worship of stones, and stocks, and images, for real and true gods.

I believe we are bound to *follow peace with all men*; Heb. xii. 14. yet I believe we may contend for the faith so earnestly, as to burn heretics.

I believe we must *follow holiness too, without which no man shall see the Lord*; Heb. xii. 14. yet I am persuaded sin can do no real hurt to a believer.

Now who is there that has any value for the honour of the gospel, for the glory of Christ, for the purity of our religion, and the welfare of the church, that would establish such a test of communion, by which all these sorts of persons may claim admission? A church composed of such a variety of sects, that differ so widely in points so numerous and so important, would much more resemble the ark of Noah, with all manner of creatures in it, clean and unclean, than the fold of Christ, where none but his sheep should have admittance, or such as have the visible marks of his sheep upon them.

The other incongruities, inconveniences, and mishiefs that will necessarily attend a church, founded upon this test of admission, shall be more largely and particularly described in my answer to the next question, to which I refer the reader.

Perhaps it will be said by way of reply to all these arguments, that "where any person professes his faith in the mere words of scripture, and yet makes it appear that he understands them in such an erroneous sense, as is inconsistent with the gospel of Christ, or the fundamentals of christianity, such a person ought not to be admitted to christian communion, because he plainly overthrows by his explication, what he asserts by his confession: But where he gives no explication at all, it should be presumed that he believes all necessary truth." To this I answer,

I. That if a confession of faith, in the mere words of scripture, be a sufficient test for church-fellowship, no man who professes those words ought to be excluded, let him explain them how he please; for if the rule of scripture does indeed require you to receive all that profess the faith in scriptural words, no particular and perverse explications whatsoever should break in upon this sacred rule, lest hereby, you who exclude him, set yourself up as a judge of the sense of scripture for other folks, and instead of making the words of scripture your test, you make your own sense of it the test of communion, which is the very thing you pretend to avoid, and which you profess to renounce.

II. I add further, if you allow that a perverse or antichristian exposition of scripture in fundamental points, may exclude a man who professes the words of scripture from the communion, then a just and reasonable suspicion of any persons's antichristian exposition of it, may give just ground for enquiry into his sense of it, before he be received to a christian church; even as a just and reasonable suspicion of any man's immorality, gives just ground for a stricter enquiry into his morals; for if he hath not christian faith, he is no more fit for the christian communion, than one who hath not christian practice.

Now suppose a person be a mere stranger to you in his moral life, you ought to make enquiry concerning his morality before you receive him, and not take his virtue for granted: And by the same reason, if he be a mere stranger to you in his faith, you ought to make the same enquiry concerning his sense of scripture, in order to know that he is not an heretic, or that he does not profess spiritual words in an heretical sense; and not always take it for granted, that he believes the scripture in its true sense.

Thus these two parts of the test of communion, viz. profession of the true faith, and a pious practice, will stand upon the same foot; and a man may be excluded even by your own concession, if he wants either of them, even though he profess the words of scripture. And there ought to be an explicit discovery of both these by the candidate in order to christian communion, and not merely an implicit belief of them in those who are appointed to examine him.

As I grant with you, that where a person has in general a fair moral character among those who know him, we ought not to take up and indulge groundless and unreasonable suspicions of his virtue; so where a person, who appears to be sincere and pious, makes profession of his faith in more general language, we ought not to take up unreasonable and groundless suspicions that he is an heretic. But as in times of universal and spreading corruption of manners, there should be a more strict enquiry into the conversation of every communicant, so in times of spreading error, where scripture words are frequently used in an heretical sense, there ought to be a more strict enquiry into his faith; and it is a very reasonable demand, that he should explain his particular sense of the general words of scripture in fundamental points, and tell what he means by them, that he may not cover gross heresies and antichristian opinions, under the confession and disguise of scriptural language, that so antichristians may not be received into a christian church.

Sect. VII. The last argument I shall propose against making a confession of the express words of scripture a sufficient evidence of christian knowledge is this, that the scripture

itself does not directly, and in express words, contain all that knowledge of particular truths and duties that is necessary to christian communion. I say of particular truths and duties, for I own it contains all in generals.

Under the seventh question, I have made it appear evidently, that the knowledge necessary to christian communion, includes in it, both a knowledge of all those things that are necessary to salvation, and a knowledge of all those things that are necessary to practise, and enjoy this communion.

Now if we first survey all those truths and duties that are necessary to salvation, perhaps we might find particular articles, either of faith or practice, that are not set down in most express language in the very words of scripture. I grant, they are all so expressed in general terms, that a mean understanding, and a slight and easy turn of thought, is sufficient to derive from scripture all the particulars that are necessary to salvation; every needful explication, or consequence, lies plain and open to the view of common reason, though it may not be directly expressed in the very letter of scripture.

But I chuse rather to survey those things that are necessary to practise, and to enjoy christian communion; such knowledge is as needful, in order to partake of the Lord's-supper in a regular manner in the christian church: And these things are not all contained in express words of scripture, but require something of explication and consequence to make them appear. As for instance,

1. If baptism be necessary before the Lord's-supper, it is necessary also to know the nature and design of baptism, the meaning of being baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit; and the manner of performing it, whether it must be done by dipping or sprinkling, or whether both be not lawful; and whether baptism in infancy be sufficient. Now all these are not written down in express words of scripture.

2. It is necessary also that a person should know what is the nature of the Lord's-supper; what the bread and wine represent; what is the design of blessing, breaking, and distributing them; who are the persons that must do this: And a woman must know, whether women are to be admitted to the Lord's-supper; all which things are not fully and expressly delivered in the very words of scripture.

3. That several persons, who make a credible profession of christianity, must agree to meet together, in order to celebrate christian worship, and partake of this ordinance; and that it is not to be received alone, because it is an ordinance of communion.

I might instance in other things that are necessary attend-

ants on these ordinances, considered as human actions, which the light of nature plainly dictates, and which may be drawn by the most obvious and natural consequences from the directions or examples of scripture; but they are not found there in express words, nor indeed is these any need of it, since they lie so open to the weakest exercise of reason.

Now to sum up the last argument. If there be any articles of christian belief, or practice, necessary to salvation, or to public christian worship, and to a regular participation of the Lord's-supper, which are not laid down and described in the express words of scripture, then may we not conclude, that a mere declaration of the belief of the bible, or any part of it, is not a certain evidence of knowledge sufficient to demand christian communion, where all explications and consequences are utterly refused?

Sect. VIII. The great objection against all my discourse is this; that "since the word of God is a sufficient and perfect rule to direct christians in their faith and practice, the words of scripture are therefore a sufficient and perfect test of christian knowledge." The scripture, say they, is certainly capable of itself to determine all our doctrines, and all our duties; it is sufficient to furnish the man of God perfectly unto all good works, and it is able to make every man wise unto salvation. It was given for this end by the inspiration of God; and it does not stand in need of the assistance of human inferences and explications, in things necessary for christians to believe and practise; 2 Tim. iii. 15—17. Therefore an acknowledgment of the scripture, or the most considerable articles of christianity in the express words of it, is a sufficient test for christian communion.

This argument is very popular, and drawn out into much flowery eloquence, to persuade and captivate the unwary. The writers on this side of the question brighten and flash upon the reader, and, as it were, overwhelm him, if the eye of his judgment be weak, with such dazzling language as this: "What are not the words, which God himself hath written, effectual for all the purposes of christianity, without the addition of the words of men? Is not God wiser than man? And can any man form for himself a better test of knowledge, than God has done? Did not Christ, and his Spirit, which spoke by the apostles, know how to express divine truths in the best manner, and in words fittest for every use and service of the christian church? Has our Lord Jesus Christ so little consulted the truth and security of his gospel, as well as the peace and welfare of his churches, as not to express every matter necessary to communion, in plain language? Can we, shall we, dare we indulge so unbecoming an opinion of the care of our blessed Lord? Can

there be any other words necessary to express his doctrine by, than those which himself has chosen? Thus the torrent of such popular harangue drowns all distinctions of things, and carries away the assent before due consideration.

To all this flourish, I answer first by way of concession; that our blessed Lord is all-wise, and has the tenderest care of his church, in providing a sufficiency of helps for every occasion. The holy scripture is complete, and sufficient of itself to teach us all things necessary; and the instructions of it are clear, plain and evident to every humble inquirer: There is no need of any additions of men to this perfect rule, nor any words that men can invent fitter to express those doctrines and duties, more suitably to the occasion and purpose for which each part of scripture was written, I am abundantly persuaded, that from the book of God every plain christian may easily collect his own duty in the necessary affairs of his salvation, and every man may obtain knowledge enough to fit him for the communion of a christian church.

Sect. IX. But to give a full and direct answer to the force of the foregoing objection, I would lay down these considerations, which may help to remove those glaring rays of rhetoric that diffuse themselves round the argument, impose upon, and dazzle weaker minds, and prevent them from beholding the question in its true light, which, if once seen in its proper sense, would be determined with much ease.

Consideration I. It is generally agreed by protestant writers, that not the mere words of scripture, but the sense of it is properly scripture. The words are but the shell in which the divine ideas are conveyed to the mind. It is not the words of the bible, but the sense of it, which has the proper characters of the word of God. If any words or language might pretend to this, surely it must be the Hebrew and Greek originals: Now these have no such power upon an unlearned Dane, or Swede, a French or an English man, as is attributed in scripture to the word of God. These words in Greek would not pierce or divide in sunder the soul and spirit of a barbarian: The gospel in mixed Syriac language, in which Christ himself spoke, would never prove the power of God to the salvation of a Roman, or a Turk: Nor could the perfect law of the Lord, in Hebrew, convert the soul of a Muscovite. But when these original words are translated into each language, and convey the same divine instruction and sense to different nations; this sense and instruction, which is properly the word of God, work upon the heart, and make a new creature; for the sense of scripture is the same in all languages, though the words are very different. Hence it is plain, that we do not in the least derogate from the honour of the bible, while we declare, that it is the sense of scripture, and

not the mere words of it, that must be our rule of duty and practice.

II. That the mere words of scripture were never given us for a test of truth and error, but the sense of scripture is such a test; much less can we suppose the words of scripture given us for a test of every man's knowledge, in order to christian communion. Those that are of this opinion, profess indeed to pay a most exalted and superlative honour to the holy scripture, in making the very letters and syllables of it so effectual and powerful, to determine all controversies in the christian church with the greatest ease, and to charm and subdue the warring tongues of men to submission and silence: For if an heretic acknowledges these letters and syllables to be divine, no man must open his mouth against him. But surely this is such a honour, as God never designed for letters and syllables; and if I might venture to use so hard a word, I should ask whether it were not a superstitious regard paid to ink and paper? When errors are proposed, we are indeed called to examine them by the law and the testimony; Is. viii. 20. and it is said, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. But the design of this text is not to make the very words and syllables the judges of truth, but the meaning and sense of them: I prove it thus:

Suppose I doubt whether Christ "made a real and proper satisfaction to the justice of God for the offences of man;" I compare this with the words of scripture, and I find there, that *Christ redeemed us from the curse, he bare our sins on his body, he was made a sacrifice for sin, he is our propitiation, or atonement:* but I cannot find the words real and proper satisfaction in scripture; how then must I judge whether this be truth, or no? I cannot do it by the mere words, for these are different; but by its agreement in sense and meaning with those other scriptural expressions, I find it to be a divine truth.

I prove it by another instance thus: Suppose I am told, that I must subdue my pride and vanity of mind, and that I must repent of all backbiting and intemperance, of which I have been guilty, if ever I would be saved:" I consult my bible, and there I find that *I must repent of sin, that I must mortify the deeds of the body*, that I must *crucify the flesh with its lusts*, that I must *pluck out my right eye, and cut off my right hand, if I would enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Now how shall I know what is my duty! Surely, the literal sense of the words cannot be. How then shall I find my duty, but by explaining the spiritual sense of these metaphors, in which scripture so much abounds? *A right hand, and a right eye*, signifies those sins which are beloved as those members of the body; and then I must draw such consequences as these, viz. "If sin must be repented of, then *backbiting and intemperance* must be repented of, for they are

sins; and pride and vanity of mind must be subdued for the same reason." If the words of scripture may not be treated in this manner, and applied to solve any doubt or difficulty by explications and inferences, the scripture cannot be a sufficient test of truth and error; and if this method be allowed, then it becomes also a sufficient test of christian knowledge in order to communion; which is all that I contend for.

III. Most of the books of scripture were written at different times, and upon very different occasions, to reprove some particular vices, to refute some special errors or heresies, to instruct in some particular affairs relating to doctrine and duty, in such expressions as were most exactly suited, and divinely proper to answer those special designs. The metaphors and figures of speech there used were well known, or well explained in that age, and accommodated to the genius and understanding of those persons, for whose benefit they were first written: And by these divine writings we have sufficient direction to find out all necessary truths and duties at all times, in all nations, and ages of the church, by comparison of things, and just inferences. Now though God foreknew what errors would arise in every age, yet it is impossible that so small a book as the New Testament, could mention and refute every error that might possibly arise, or forbid every particular vice or corruption that might spring up in following ages; and all this in express words, and in terms most directly opposing those sins and errors which are almost infinite, and as yet had no being. Therefore without any derogation from the sufficiency of scripture, we may justly allow, that it is possible for wise and pious men, that live in those succeeding ages, to explain the general sense of scripture in such expressions, as may more directly and effectually guard against the sins and heresies of the age; this is certainly needful in order to instruct the ignorant; and some confession of this kind may be proper and necessary in times of error, to keep the communion of the churches of Christ pure and holy; yet this also may be done, as I have shewn before, without any express imposition of any set human forms; but it can never be done effectually by making the mere words of scripture a test of communion, which in all ages heretics have learned to pervert to their own sense.

IV. The sufficiency of scripture, for our rule of faith and practice in revealed religion, does not signify a sufficiency of the bare words and syllables of scripture, to declare every particular article of doctrine or duty in direct and express terms: But that it sufficiently includes and contains them all; so that by a most easy and obvious exercise of reason, all necessary truths and duties may be found, either in express words, or in easy, plain and natural consequences; and that there is no need of old traditions, nor any new inventions of men. The sufficiency of natural light, to direct innocent man in natural religion, does not

lly that all the general and particular articles of it were ten actually, and constantly abiding in the mind, but that are plainly and easily deducible by natural reason. So a k is said to be sufficient to teach any art or science, if it con- s all the main principles of it, so that all the parts of this art cience, may be very easily learned thereby. The New Tes- ent is sufficient to teach us the holy skill of prayer, because it ludes every thing necessary for that duty; and the Lord's- yer has been generally esteemed a perfect model for that pa- worship; yet a child may say over all the words of the Lord's- yer, and know not at all how to pray: And if it were possible a strong memory to repeat all the New Testament by heart, would not be a sufficient proof, that that person was acquainted the divine skill of praying. So the bible is abundantly suffi- nt to furnish a preacher for his work; but if he could say never many of the words of the bible without book, it would not be a per test of his ability to preach.

This spiritual furniture and skill for the performance of ying or preaching, is to be obtained by comparing several ts of the bible together, by learning their sense and meaning, d by drawing proper inferences from several passages of it, d knowing how to apply them to all particular cases in ser- ns and prayers: The same may be said in proportion con- rning the furniture and fitness of a person to be admitted to ristian communion. Now in order for a man to manifest that has this spiritual skill and furniture, he must acquaint us in me other words, what he means by these words of scripture at he can repeat by memory.

It is not at all inconsistent with the clearness and perfection scripture, that the unlearned should use their reason in find- g out doctrines and duties, by comparing scripture with scrip- re, and drawing general inferences from the practice, example d occasional speeches of Christ and his apostles; as it has ever been counted inconsistent with the clearness and perfection f it, that learned men must translate the Greek and Hebrew to our mother-tongue: For the bible in Greek and Hebrew, is ore insufficient to lead a poor Englishman to heaven without ranslation, than an English bible is to lead him thither, without e exercise of his reason in explications and inferences.

The plain and natural consequences of scripture, have in a rger sense been often called scripture itself; and have always een justly allowed as sufficient to determine any controversy in ligion, or prove any truth, or refute any error. The example f Christ and his apostles, shew us the use and the necessity of nsequences; they argued in this manner against their oppo- ents, who did not acknowledge their divine commission. Chil- ngworth himself, in that famous paragraph of his which is so

often cited, acknowledges that plain inferences from scripture make up part of our religion: The bible, saith he, with emphasis, "The bible is the religion of protestants; whatsoever else they believe besides it, and the plain irrefragable, indubitable consequences of it, well may they hold it as a matter of opinion, but not as a matter of faith and religion."

Nor is it necessary to the plainness, evidence and strength of any consequences of scripture, that all persons should own them, and none deny them; for the plainest and most open truths have been denied by some persons in all ages, through want of attention, through false education, through the prepossession of other opinions, through the attachment to a party, through obstinacy of temper, and blind zeal: But all the consequences of scripture, that are necessary to faith and practice in order to salvation, are so plain, that a honest, sincere and diligent person, though weak in understanding, may easily find them out by reading, meditation, humble prayer, and readiness to receive the truth in the love of it. Here let it be noted, that the necessary consequences of scripture, may be called the doctrine of scripture; though the consequences of the doctrines of Luther, Calvin, or any other man, may not be called their doctrines; because *the Spirit of God, who searcheth the deep things of God*, well knew all the propositions and consequences that ever could be drawn, and fairly deduced from the words of scripture when he first inspired the sacred writers; and therefore he designed them all as certain and divine truths. But it is not so with men, who may hold such opinions as are attended with unhappy consequences, which yet they themselves may not be aware of, or perhaps may expressly deny.

V. The most perfect rule always needs a proper application to every particular case; and this does not at all diminish its perfection, nor lessen its perspecuity. Scripture is still the perfect and final judge of truth and duty in things sacred, though every man must apply the words and sense of scripture to his own case, for his own instruction, edification, and salvation; and every church for their own practice of communion, must apply the words of scripture according to their own best judgment. The law is a perfect judge of right and wrong in things civil, though it must be applied, by the reason and wisdom of man, to particular cases. A rule, or square, is not imperfect because it requires the hand of the builder to apply it, in order to measure the house, or the wall. We are not brutes that cannot reason, nor mere white paper, fit to take nothing but the express stamp of letters and syllables; reasoning is one of our noblest powers, and God demands its exercise: We are bid to *search the scriptures*, and *compare spiritual things with spiritual*. It is impossible to transfer, or apply, any general sentence of scripture to

particular exhortations, reproofs, instruction, conviction, or comfort for ourselves or others, without deducing consequences, and thereby bringing the general words to our daily present occasions: Nor is it possible for any persons to be admitted into a church of Christ, upon just and regular grounds, without comparing their personal characters, their confessions, and their practice with the word of God, by the exercise of our reason, and applying to that particular case, what we derive and infer from general rules, or parallel examples; now all this cannot be done without making use of the consequences of scripture.

VI. This test of christian knowledge this supposed rule of communion, is not found among the express words of scripture, I might therefore ask leave of our protestant brethren, who strenuously maintain this principle, to make an address to them, in their own language, thus: "Surely if this rule of christian communion be of such absolute necessity to maintain peace, and secure truth, we may wonder why it is not written down expressly in scripture. Has Jesus Christ so little consulted the peace of his churches, and the truth of his gospel, as to neglect so necessary a rule of church communion, without which you suppose, that neither peace nor truth can be maintained? O what a world of strife and confusion in the churches might have been prevented by an express appointment of the words of scripture, to be the universal test of knowledge for christian communion? Is the scripture so careful to express all things necessary, and yet is this omitted? May I not thence infer, according to your own principles, that this rule of communion is not necessary? Indeed, in my opinion, it is so far from being written in the bible in express words that by all the exercise of my reason, I cannot derive it from my bible, by any plain or certain consequence; I have not yet seen evidence enough to believe it to be a sufficient, or an appointed rule; much less of so absolute necessity to christian communion, truth, or peace."

QUEST. XI.—*Whether all sorts of Protestants may join together as Members of the same Church.*

SECT. I. By the name protestant, I intend not only those that protested against the corruptions of the Roman church, and the edict of the Emperor in Germany at the beginning of the reformation, but I include also all that hold the same general principle, making the bible the only and perfect rule of faith and manners, and giving every single person a right to judge for himself concerning the sense and meaning of the bible in matters of religion, and to practise according to his own sentiments in things sacred.

Now if the question be put, "whether all such persons professing the same protestant principles with all their different sentiments, may be united in the same church," I answer,

1. It is impossible, and they cannot.—2. It is unlawful, and they ought not.—3. If it were both possible and lawful, yet it is highly inexpedient, and therefore it should not be done. First, "it is impossible and they cannot join in the same communion." There are some actions necessary in order to christian communion in worship, which are appointed in general in the holy scripture, but must be performed in some particular and determinate way: Now this in the very nature of things makes it necessary to determine the words of scripture to a particular sense; and different sects of protestants determine these words in such different ways, as will often be exceeding hard, and sometimes utterly impossible to be reconciled and made consistent in one communion: As for instance,

1. Some cannot in conscience attend upon the ministry of a person, who has not been ordained by the imposition of the hands of a diocesan bishop, for they think him no minister of Christ; others refuse him for a minister, who has not had the hands of several presbyters imposed in his ordination; and there are a third sort again, that think either of these two ordinations to be unnecessary, if not unlawful; and believe him no minister of Christ, unless he be chosen by a congregation, and set apart to that work amongst them by fasting and prayer. Note, that I speak here of those that are each of them strict and rigid in the extremes of their own way, honest and sincere in the main, but zealous and obstinate in their own principles; now these can never join under one ministry, unless their minister has passed through all these three sorts of ordinations, which is not to be expected.

2. Some think it utterly unlawful to pray in public, without a form, lest rash and hasty expressions be *uttered before God*; Eccl. v. 2. Others think it equally unlawful to use a form of prayer, lest they *quench the Spirit* which is given to teach them to pray; 1 Thess. v. 19. Eph. vi. 18. and how can these possibly join in the same prayer?

3. Some esteem the Lord's-prayer so glorious, so perfect, and so universal a prayer for all times and ages, that it should never be omitted in public worship; others fancy it unlawful to be used at all as a prayer, ever since the Spirit was given to men at the ascension of Christ, because it is in their sense a confinement of the Spirit to a form of words.

4. Some think the practice of singing the praises of God to be a necessary part of christian worship, and cannot persuade themselves to live without it; others esteem it a mere antichristian invention, and they dare not be present for a moment in an

assembly that sings, lest they give countenance to false worship and superstition; and if any other music be joined to the voice, they count it still more heinous and abominable.

5. Some believe the Lord's-supper cannot be celebrated aright at noon, because it was instituted in the evening, and is called a supper; others that live scattered at great distances in a wide country parish, can never meet to communicate in an evening, especially four or five months in the winter; and they think the Lord's-supper at noon is a very lawful and proper practice, and necessary to them, because otherwise they cannot attend it.

6. Some suppose, that it is very irreverent and unlawful to communicate in a sitting posture, and think it their duty to kneel, when they receive the seal of the greatest of blessings from the hands of God: others think no other posture of body lawful besides sitting; because it is a feast, and was instituted with the proper gestures at a table; and many foreign protestants esteem sitting to have too much familiarity and irreverence, and kneeling too much like adoration of the bread, and therefore always stand at that ordinance. And here we may suppose some narrow-spirited christians, of each sort, that dare not be present at the sacrament, where a different gesture is used, lest they seem to encourage a sinful practice by their communicating together.

7. Some are persuaded, that none have a right to the communion that were not baptized by dipping, and that upon a profession of their faith, for they count all the rest unbaptized; and these can never join at the Lord's-supper, with a minister or people that were only baptized in infancy by sprinkling, and think that sufficient.

Some are satisfied that there is no holy-day in the week but Saturday, or the seventh, and they require public worship and the communion on that day; others think the first day of the week is alone holy, and they demand the celebration of the Lord's-supper on that day constantly; nor can they leave all the common businesses of life to attend on the worship of Saturday.

Now every man sees how impracticable it is to bring these different sort of protestants to the settled communion of the same church. I confess I have represented their different sentiments in their extremes, and in the highest degrees of opposition; but it must be granted also, that several such sort of christians are to be found, whose weaker judgments and warm zeal, have carried these matters to the same extremes of opposition in which I have represented them; therefore my argument stands good, and such a promiscuous communion appears impossible. Yet here I would lay down this caution; that though these sorts of protestants are necessarily excluded from mutual communion, it is not because either of them are unworthy of it, or because it is

unlawful to communicate with each other, but merely because their different and contrary forms of worship render it impossible. Let them not therefore censure or *judge one another*, but so far as true piety appears, let them account each other good christians, and be ready to do all proper christian offices for, and toward each other; and let them wait till God shall convince either of them of their excessive rigour, and unreasonable strictness, in their particular opinions, and in the mean time let them be heartily willing to join with each other in such parts of worship in which they agree, where just occasions may require it.

Secondly, If the thing were possible, and such a mingled communion of all professed protestants could be practised, yet there are some cases wherein it would be unlawful, and ought not to be practised: For several persons may believe the bible to be the only and perfect rule of faith and duty, and yet may put such a sense upon it, as is either dishonourable, dangerous, or destructive of the christian faith; I have made this appear at large under the foregoing question; there I have shewn that there may be Anthropomorphite and Arian protestants, Sabellian, Socinian, and Pelagian; rational and enthusiastic; literal and allegorical; Calvinist, Arminian, and Antinomian; there I have largely proved, that persons professing the bible, may deny the divinity and satisfaction of Christ, the real resurrection of Christ, the operations of the Holy Spirit, the final resurrection of the body, and several other such important doctrines, by turning the expressions of scripture to a mere allegorical and figurative sense: Now as a a certain author says, "If a man use the words of scripture, but impose a very different and new sense upon them, he may thereby as well bring in a new gospel, as if he used words of his own; and so he subjects himself justly to the anathema, or curse of the apostle. Gal. i. 8, 9. *As we said before, so say I now again, if any man preach any other gospel unto you, than that ye have received, let him be accursed.* It is a very just and remarkable saying to this purpose of doctor Reynolds, in conference with Hart: "He who believes the words of Christ, in the sense of antichrist, and rejects the sense of Christ, and his Spirit, is not a christian, but is, indeed and truth, antichristian." Now with such sort of persons, christian communion ought not to be maintained, for they who deny the christian faith, can have no right to the special ordinances of Christ.

Thirdly, if such a promiscuous communion of all professing protestants were both possible and lawful, yet it is highly inexpedient. Now the apostle has determined it, that things which are utterly inexpedient, and such as hinder the edification of the church, should not be practised; 1 Cor. x. 23. The great and evident inexpediency, and the many inconveniences of such a community, will appear under the following heads:

SECT. II. Inconvenience I. What a most uncomfortable communion would christians have among brethren and sisters, in the same community of such wild and distant principles, as those ten differences of christians I have reckoned up under the former question? Read over all their opinions again, and say, how utterly inexpedient is it that these should be united in one church! *What fellowship has righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what concord has Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols?* 2 Cor. vi. 14—16. For he that disbelieves any necessary articles of the christian faith, we may rank him among the infidels.

Christian communion, in the pleasure and profit of it, consists very much in an union of hearts in constant public worship, in praying occasionally with one another, and conferring together about divine things: But what bonds of charity can unite their hearts, where one justly suspects the other's faith in points of greatest importance? How can they join with pleasure in hearing the same word of God, while their sense and meaning under those words is so extremely different, and contrary to each other, as light and darkness, as God and the creature, as heaven and earth? What pleasure in joining to address the same Saviour, while one believes him to be the true and eternal God, the other thinks him but a mere man? What harmony is there in their joys and praises, while one adores this Redeemer for bearing the punishment of all his sins, and dying as a sacrifice in his stead; and the other, by the same expressions of adoration, only gives him thanks for confirming his doctrine of remission of sins by becoming a martyr for it? What delight can the members of the same church take in conversing with each other, who differ so widely even in things of experimental and practical godliness? While one is relating the power and freedom of divine grace in convincing him of sin, and shining into his heart to give him the saving knowledge of the gospel in turning his mind from earth to heaven, and changing his whole soul, with all the powers of it, into a divine temper, in securing him from this and that temptation, and over ruling his spirit to persevere in the paths of holiness; the other believes that divine grace and power has no hand in all this, but what is only providential, by external means and helps; and that this piety is really to be abscribed to the freedom of his own will; and perhaps a third person shall interpose, and say in Antinomian language, "There is no need you should be so solicitous about these lesser matters of freedom from temptation, or the mortification of sin, either by divine grace, or by your own will: if you are but a believer in Christ, and your faith be strong, sin cannot do you hurt, and you shall certainly be saved." *What wretched* communion in prayer, or holy

conference, must be maintained among fellow-members of the same church, whose opinions are so fearfully divided?

SECT. III. Inconvenience II. What an unhappy station must a minister have amongst such a people? How difficult to fulfil his ministrations of prayer and preaching without offence? Or rather how impossible? Surely the work of a preacher is to explain the scripture to his hearers; but he can hardly step out beyond the very express words of scripture, but he breaks in upon some of their darling sentiments: He can scarce comment upon any text, but he opposes the one side or the other of two contrary opinions, and grieves some of the flock: He can hardly speak of the person of Christ Jesus the mediator, but he offends the Arian, the Samosatenian, or Athanasian: He can scarce express any thing about the redemption and atonement of Christ, but he awakens either the Calvinist, or the Socinian, to jealousy, and affronts their sacred doctrines: He must not ascribe glory to the Father, Son, and Spirit, lest he displease the Unitarians in his assembly; nor must he neglect it, lest the Trinitarian take umbrage. He dares not name the word perseverance, lest the Arminian be angry; and if he should talk of falling from grace, the Calvinist trembles, and half despairs. And as preaching would be rendered almost impracticable, unless he confined himself only to mere moral duties, such as Seneca might preach; so all his ministrations in prayer and thanksgiving would be most unhappily perplexed and confined. He must not pray for forgiveness of sins, for the antinomian believer does not want it; nor for almighty sanctifying grace, for the remonstrant christian knows no need of it: He must not confess original sin, for the pelagian disowns himself guilty; nor dares he mention a word of *the imputed righteousness of Christ, or justification by faith alone*, lest half the assembly rise in arms against him: Nor must he venture to give thanks for the free electing love of God, least two-thirds of his church shew a murmuring dissent. Surely there is little left for this man to talk of in his pulpit, but what he may borrow from Plato, Plutarch, or Epictetus.

SECT. IV. To prevent this inconvenience, the patrons of this opinion assert, "That a minister ought not to impose any particular sense on any of the controverted scriptures in his preaching:" but all his business is freely and fairly to acquaint the people with those various senses of scripture, in which the different sects of christianity have contrived to explain it: He must represent the reasons impartially on both sides, and leave them to the judgment of the hearers, "without biassing of them, as one expresses it, by the needless declaration of his own opinion:" And they tell us, "it would be much more edifying to all christians, if ministers in their public discourses expressly asserted no other things than such as all, who read the scrip-

re and receive it for the rule of their faith, acknowledge to be rtain." To this I reply,

Reply I. What poor food would this be for hungry and irsty souls to be treated with nothing else in a christian church, t the mere inculcation of moral duties, or the narration of ristian controversies. What [illegible]ort could a weary and heavy den sinner, bowed down and broken with a sense of guilt, tain from such a discourse? Must a poor perishing creature, nder the fears of the wrath of God, have no relief given it rom a just and full explication of the sacrifice of Christ, because the Socinian does not believe it? And must a weak christian, conflicting long with sins and temptations, have no encouragement from the doctrine of inward effectual grace, lest the Arminian take offence at it? Is this that way of preaching that Christ has ordained to save guilty and impotent creatures, by a keep sense of the true and only relief, or a mere dubious proposal of it?

II. Besides, how can a minister answer it to God, or his own conscience, if he sees errors in matters of importance growing amongst men, perhaps in his own church too, and does not attempt to prevent or refute them by his best interpretation of the word of God? Is he not *set for the defence and confirmation of the gospel;* Phil. i. 17. Is he not bound to maintain *sound doctrine*, and to teach no other; 1 Tim. i. 3. Must not he *contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints;* Jude verse 3. How narrow is the work of a gospel minister, and how much less useful is his labour or his office, if he be forbid this service to Christ, and the church? There were some little points of controversy, in the apostles' days, about the lawfulness of *meats*, &c. which if they were never determined, would not be destructive to christianity; concerning these, the apostle at some seasons directs to keep our faith, or opinion, to ourselves; Rom. xiv. 22. Yet at other times he bids Timothy preach his own sense of them, and declare for christian liberty, and the free use of food. 1 Tim. iv. 6. *If thou put the brethren in mind of these things, thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ*, &c. Now can we think that Timothy should publicly give his sense in such circumstantial things, and yet not give it in the most important matters of the satisfaction and atonement of Christ, and the doctrines of the efficacious sanctifying grace of the Spirit? Read 2 Tim. ii. 14, 15, 18, 23, &c. Tit. i. 9, 10, 13. and chapter ii. 1, 2. and judge if the apostle requires, or even indulges those young preachers to propose important doctrines in such a doubtful way, as may *minister questions, and gender strifes;* and in such an indifferent manner, as though it was no matter which opinion his hearers embraced: Surely this would be the way to keep men *ever learning, and never coming to* settled *knowledge of the truth.*

III. I might add in the third place, how can it be supposed, that every minister who has determined his own sentiments in these controverted points, should represent the different senses of scripture in just and impartial language, so as not to favour either side? Will not his own opinion give a warmth of delivery, or a brightness of expression, while he is representing the reasons of it? And will he not be tempted with a cold and languid faintness, to propose the arguments of those that differ from him? It is utterly as unreasonable to expect such an unbiassed indifferency in his explications of the important points in the word of God, as it is unrighteous to require it.

IV. In the last place I reply, that such a practice as this would kindle contentions instead of quenching them: It would raise perpetual strife in the church, instead of composing it; and by relating the opinions and arguments on all sides, would furnish every warm temper with weapons offensive and defensive, to carry on the controversial war, and fight it out at home. This thought naturally leads me to mention the third inconvenience, of forming such a mixed and motley church.

Sect. V. Inconvenience III. This sort of communion would be much more likely to tear itself to pieces by perpetual jangles, disputes, and quarrels, than to maintain peace and unity. Nor could this pretended *bond of peace*, an agreement in express words of scripture, secure it. Our Saviour has already given a fair decision of this matter, when he assures us, that *a house divided against itself can never stand;* Mat. xii. 25. These persons that entertain so different opinions in religion, might agree well enough in the common affairs of life, if they were not joined in one church, and by that means brought constantly to worship together; but when they must hear continually the same sermons, attend the same prayers, and offer thanks to God together in the same words, with different meanings, it is not possible to secure them from awakening their jarring and contrary sentiments, whensoever any thing relating to those subjects is mentioned; and it is most likely too it will rouse their anger, their contempt, and their uncharitable censures of those that differ from them in points of importance. Thus the proposed band of peace would become a fire-brand of perpetual war, till it ended in divisions and desolation. And this event may justly and reasonably be expected upon the election of every new officer in the church, as often as death, or removal of communion, or incapacity, &c. give occasion for a new choice. Will not each party be zealous to elect a person of their own sentiments? And the church by this means be crumbled into many parties, and divided amongst many candidates? Thus the passions of men will have a strong temptation to exert themselves in wrath and reproaches; nor can any of them be per-

ded to yield and drop their own candidates, which might much more easily done, if the competitors were of the same nion.

SECT. VI. Inconvenience IV. Such a principle or test of nmunion, might in some few years quite change the ministers d ministrations, the whole scheme and order of a church of rist, from moderate calvinist or lutheran, to antinomian, pelan, or socinian, from christian worshippers to antichristian laters, and from a temple of God to *a synagogue of Satan*; d according to this rule, the church has no power, nor right prevent it. Suppose a church of pious lutherans, or calvinists, nsisting of thirty or forty members, whereof but eleven or relve are men; if providentially six or seven of these die in a w years, and six or seven bold antinomians, or socinians, are lmitted on the mere profession of scripture: They become the ajority, and consequently the rulers of the whole church; they ause pastors, and appoint ministrations and orders according to eir own sense of scripture; what must all the twenty or thirty riginal members of the church do, that walked and worshipped any years together in holiness and comfort, according to the octrine and practice of Luther, or Calvin? Must this lesser arty of men, and perhaps almost all the women of the church, it still under such preaching, and such ministrations, as an ntinomian, or a socinian pastor would entertain them with, to heir weekly public sorrow, and their mourning in secret every lay? Or must they quietly depart from the communion of the hurch, and each of them seek their better edification in new hurches where they could find it?

Perhaps also this church might be possessed of many temoral advantages, they might have a fair and well-built place of vorship belonging to the community, with gifts or annuities for he support of the ministry and the poor; plate and linen, and ther utensils for the celebration of holy ordinances given to the hurch: Must seven or eight professed antinomians, or socinians, y this means become the possessors of it? And the old memers, while they seek their better edification, relinquish their first ociety and place of worship, and all these temporal possessions at nce, which were given for the sacred uses of that calvinist or utheran church? And yet they have their own poor to maintain till, who cannot find their edification in the socinian or antinomian worship? Can that be a necessary rule of church-communion, which would thus injure the greatest part of the church, ncluding the women, and rob them all of their spiritual profit, and their outward advantages at once?

The tables may be turned, and the same inconveniences would arise to a socinian, or antinomian church, by admitting calvinists, or lutherans. Now if such a sort of mixed commu-

nion be impracticable, unlawful, and highly inexpedient, as I think it is plainly proved beyond contradiction, the question must be determined on the negative side, and all sorts of protestants cannot be members of one particular church. A very natural question arises here, "whether no christians must join in communion, but those that are in all things of the same opinion?" This shall be the subject of my next enquiry.

QUEST. XII.—*Whether no Christians must join in the same Communion, but those that are in all Things of the same Opinion?*

SECT. I. I hope there is nothing that I have said in the foregoing discourses can be interpreted into so narrow a sense, as to exclude all protestants from the same communion, but those whose sentiments are exactly alike. This would make all communion impracticable; for it will be hard to find two persons in the world, that in every point of religion have the same sentiments: Or if here and there half a dozen, or half a score christians were found that came very near to each other in opinion, these must every where set up distinct societies by themselves; thus the church of Christ would be crumbled into endless divisions. To this question therefore, I answer in the first place:

I. That as the affairs of the christian world are found in this imperfect state, it seems generally most adviseable for every person to join in constant and fixed communion with such a church, or be admitted members of such a particular christian society, whose public profession comes nearest to his own sentiments, where he can possibly have opportunity to do it; this would lay a foundation for the greatest union and peace among the members of the same church; considering the folly and weakness of human nature, and how much our differences of opinion endanger our charity, certainly this would be the easiest and surest method of answering the design of those apostolical directions and wishes. Rom. xv. 5, 6. *God grant you to be like-minded, that ye may with one mind, and one mouth, glorify God, &c.* 1 Cor. i. 10. *I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment.* And in order to shew their general and extensive charity, they may take proper opportunities for occasional communion with other churches that differ from them in matters of less importance; and they should be as ready to admit the members of

such churches to the same privilege of occasional communion with themselves. Thus they might maintain the unity of the church of Christ in general, and preserve peace, both abroad and at home, without contention or schism.

SECT. II. But to declare my opinion particularly on this head; I would say, that there are two sorts of persons that ought never to communicate in the same sacraments; and there are three sorts of christians that need not join as members of the same church, yet may occasionally maintain communion with each other; and I think all other sorts of protestants may hold constant communion together. The persons that should never attempt to join in the same communion, either constant or occasional, are these: First, Those that differ in fundamental articles of doctrine or practice, or such articles, as either side supposes to be fundamental and necessary to salvation; for if they can never hope to meet together in heaven upon the principles they profess, I see no reason why they should join in solemn acts of special communion on earth; nor does the holy scripture require or encourage, but rather forbids it. *What communion hath light with darkness? Righteousness with unrighteousness? The temple of God with idols? And he that believeth with an infidel?* 2 Cor. vi. 14—16.

Secondly, Those that are so widely divided in their opinions about some practical points of worship or discipline, which are necessary to be practised in communicating together, but are utterly inconsistent with each other: Several such I have mentioned in the beginning of the former question; as, those that think public liturgies or singing of psalms necessary, and those that think them utterly unlawful: Such as esteem episcopal ordination of absolute necessity, and such as believe it to be sinful and antichristian, &c. These cannot hold communion together in special worship, and hardly in the general ordinances of it.

The persons that should content themselves with occasional communion together, are chiefly such as these, viz: First, These that give evidence of serious piety, but differ in very important points of doctrine, which yet they cannot certainly call fundamental; and especially such points as continually occur in preaching, praying, or other parts of worship, and would frequently disquiet and disturb the devotion of one party, or the other. Such I may suppose the better sort of remonstrants, or arminians, compared with the calvinists, and the better sort of enthusiasts, or antinomians. Secondly, Those that differ much in the external forms of worship or discipline, which yet are not utterly inconsistent with each other; but if fixed and united in one single community, they might probably occasion frequent disturbances; such are the moderate episcopalians, and baptists, *lutherans and calvinists, &c.*

Those I call moderate, who are not so strict and rigid in their opinions, nor run into such extremes, nor place so great a necessity in their particular modes of worship or discipline, but being persons of serious piety and of extensive charity, they think it proper to omit or alter, on particular occasions, what may be offensive to either side; or at least they allow either side their own particular practices and forms. These may very well unite in occasional communion, though they are fixed members of the churches of their own persuasion. A church that communicates kneeling, may allow communion to one that stands or sits: A church baptized in infancy, or in adult age, may allow communion to those that are of the contrary practice in baptism. A church that receives members upon a stricter profession of inward and experimental godliness, may allow communion to one that has been admitted a member of another church, where the profession of christianity is more large and general. A church that holds no bodily presence of Christ in the sacrament, may allow communion with one that believes con-substantiation, or that the body of Christ is present together with the bread, &c. Such occasional instances of communion might tend to enlarge the spirits of men into a good opinion of each other, and increase christian charity. But if the want of opportunity to join with christians of their own sentiments, should call or encourage them to unite as fixed members of the same community they should agree to some sort of articles of peace, not to disturb the quiet of that church, by breaking in upon and overturning its old and usual forms of ministration and government. For the peace of the church is more valuable than the amendment of some improper forms, where the life and power of godliness is preserved.

Thirdly, Those that differ in less points of christianity, but are of unsettled and unsociable principles or humours, and cannot content themselves without shifting from church to church, nor be easy with any that differ from them, without a zealous propagation of their own opinions, contrary to the rules that the apostle has given for the peace of the church, Rom. xiv. Some learned writers suppose these to be the heretics in the scripture sense. Surely these should be contented with occasional communion, and they should give satisfactory evidence of inward piety, before they are received to any communion at all.

Now if these three sorts are admitted occasionally to communicate in the special ordinances of Christ, this seems to me sufficient to answer the canons of the apostle, where we are bid *to receive such as Christ has received, and that without doubtful disputations;* Rom. xv. 7, 8. and Rom. xiv. 1. Whereas if they *should be* admitted to a full and fixed membership, power and

privilege in the same church, without any limitations by articles of peace, that would so much endanger the common edification and peace of the whole body, as to run counter to other canons of the same apostle; *Let all things be done to edification*; 1 Cor. xiv. 26. *Follow the things that make for peace*; Rom. xiv. 19. As for all other protestants, whose differences are of less moment, notwithstanding they may be very various, and almost infinite, yet if they are of a peaceful spirit, and give evidence of hearty and sincere piety, I think they may join, where they have opportunity, as complete and constant members of the same church, and worship the same God together, through *the same Lord Jesus Christ by the same Spirit*, and fulfil all duties of christian fellowship, to his glory, and their mutual edification.

When any such sort of difficulties happen in relation to the communion of christians, which cannot be determined by the plain reason and nature of things, and *concerning which we have received no certain commandment from the Lord;* the wisest man on earth can go no farther than to say with the apostle, *I give my judgment as one that hath obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful; I suppose therefore that it is good in the present* case to act in this or that manner; 1 Cor. vii. 25, 26. If such a modesty of language became that great man St. Paul, surely every lesser minister, or christian, would transgress the bounds of decency, to assume more to himself.

Sect. III. An illustration on the three last questions. What I have advanced on these subjects may receive some light perhaps, and may prevail more toward the conviction of my readers by an illustration of these cases, by a parallel instance taken from a society of philosophers: For when the same case is put in new subjects of another kind, it does not meet with the same predetermined judgment, as in subjects that have been long controverted.

Suppose several stoic philosophers join in a society, and have weekly lectures read to them, by one or more professors whom they have chosen, and once a month hold a feast, wherein some peculiar ceremonies are performed to the honour of Zeno, the master and founder of their sect. Every person that is admitted to communicate in their feast, must profess himself a stoic philosopher, a follower of Zeno, and to receive the precepts of Zeno for his principles of doctrine and practice; and he ought to give satisfaction by conference to the members or professors of this stoical society, that he owns Zeno's precepts, and that in such a sense, as is sufficient, in their judgment, to make him a good stoic. Now if any one shall mingle some of the doctrines of Epicurus therewith, or expound Zeno so as to make happiness consist in sensual pleasures, this over-

throws the stoical doctrine, which makes happiness to consist in wisdom and virtue; and such a one cannot be admitted to any communion with them in their festivals, constant or occasional.

But if any person shall mingle much of platonism, or pythagorean philosophy with the stoic, and expound Zeno, in some part of his doctrine, in the sense of Plato, or Pythagoras, perhaps he may be invited and admitted as a guest at the stoical feast, and so hold occasional communion with them; because he is truly a stoic, though a favourer of other sects. His notions are not ruinous and destructive to the most valuable principles of stoical philosophy; though he differs so much, that it would endanger that particular stoical society, if this person were received as a stated member to all the powers and privileges thereof. But as to others who hold the stoical doctrine, though one expounds it according to Epictetus, another believes it in the exposition of Antoninus, another in the exposition of Seneca, who were all stoics, these may all be admitted to constant communion, and as members of the same society; for the great ends and designs of their society are hereby promoted and secured; their several differences are but small, and very consistent with the cultivation of stoicism, and the benefits of the society.

In short, those who hold so little of Zeno's precepts, in the sense of the society, as neither to be consistent with its being, nor well-being, must be excluded from all communion with it; such are Epicurus and Democritus, even though they should subscribe all the words of Zeno. Those who hold no more of Zeno's precepts in the sense of the society, than is just consistent with the being of the society, but may naturally prove fatal and ruinous to the well-being of it, should be admitted only to occasional communion; such are those who admire Plato and Pythagoras, and mix their directions with the doctrine of stoicism. Those who hold so much of Zeno's precepts in the sense of the stoical society, as to be consistent with the being, well being, and edification of the society, may be admitted as fixed members thereof, and be entitled to all its powers and privileges; such are the followers of Epictetus, Seneca, &c.

I hope such sort of parallel instance may give some light and direction in these affairs of communion among christians: Yet these things being not exactly delivered in the word of God, nor particular rules about them determined clearly in scripture, it is evident that our Lord Jesus Christ intended that the light of nature and reason, the common principles and rules of order and society, and the most prevailing prospect of holiness, truth and love, should determine our actions in such cases;

ll keeping close to every thing that he has revealed, so far as : can find his will in scripture; and in all other things making e best use of our christian prudence and charity, for the glory God, and the good of men; 1 Cor. xiv. 30, 33. *Let all ings be done decently, and in order, for God is not the author confusion, but of peace, as in all churches of the saints.* 1 or. x. 31, 32, 33. *Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God. Give none offence, neier to the Jews, nor the Gentiles, nor to the church of God: ven as I please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, t the profit of many, that they may be saved.*

Since it is impossible in this imperfect state, that any thing civil or religious affairs should be free from imperfections, those ethods must at all times be esteemed the best, that aim at the st ends, and are attended with the fewest inconveniences. Cor. x. 23. *All things that are lawful, are not expedient: all ings that are lawful, edify not.* Rom. xiv. 17, 18. *The kingm of God is not meat and drink, but righteousness and peace, d joy in the Holy Ghost. He that in these things serveth Christ ith a humble sincerity of heart and design, is acceptable to God, nd approved of men,* even though he should not always hit upon e most prudent means. But let peace and edification be ever our eye, as our chief ends in church-affairs, according to that reat canon of the apostle; Rom. xiv. 19. *Let us therefore folw after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith e may edify another. Amen.*

DISCOURSE I.

A Pattern for a Dissenting Preacher.

JOHN vii. 46.—The officers answered, never man spake like this man.

THE Jewish church was grown very corrupt when our Lord Jesus Christ was sent into the world, as the reformer of his people, and *the Saviour of mankind.* The rulers of the church hated reformation, and would not suffer any thing to be altered in their establishment. Therefore their rage against our Saviour rose high, and the *pharisees and chief priests sent their officers to seize him,* as you find in verse 32. to seize Jesus, the best preacher that ever spoke in the name of God to men: They sent men to silence him in the midst of his sermon to summon and constrain him to appear before them. The chief priests were the highest ecclesiastical governors, and the pharisees were a set of men that applied themselves to the study of the law, and their worship, and separated themselves from the rest of the people, under a pretence of greater holiness. The Jewish clergy, and Jewish devotees, joined to send their servants upon this wicked errand to lay hold on Christ the Lord. The persons that were sent, are called *officers* in my text: Probably they might be some ecclesiastical officers that belonged to their courts, because we find that the priests had power over them, and they gave them commission for their work, though we are not acquainted with their particular title.

But when they came and heard *the gracious words that proceeded from his mouth,* his sublime doctrines of truth and mercy, and his kind invitations to thirsty sinners to receive *living water,* as you found in a few words before my text, they were astonished and struck silent, they were inwardly restrained from executing their impious commission; they returned to their masters without having done their work: And when they asked them the reason why they had not brought the preacher with them, they boldly replied, that their consciences withheld their hand from him, for *never man spake like this man.* To improve these words to our present advantage, we shall consider,

I. What difference there was between our Lord's ministry and the preaching of other men in that day.—II. What different effects it had on those that heard him.—III. Draw some inferences for our instruction, and some for our practice.

I. We shall consider "what difference there was between

our Lord's ministry, and the preaching of other men in that day." It is very likely these officers had been wont to hear the sermons of the scribes, and the doctrines of the Jews in their synagogues, where *Moses and the prophets were read every sabbath*, and generally expounded to the people; but there was something in the matter of these discourses of our Lord, something in the manner of speaking, but much more in the peculiar power attending the words, which have made these officers conclude, they had never heard such a preacher in all their lives.

1. First then, there is something in the matter of his preaching different from what those ecclesiastical officers had been used to hear. Though both Christ, and the scribes and pharisees, all pretended to take the bible for their text, yet there was a great variety in the subjects which they enlarged upon, and the substance of their discourses. They expounded the same moral law which our Saviour did, but it was in so poor and trifling a sense, in so strange and unreasonable a manner, so far from the spiritual design and divine meaning of it, that our Lord found, when he came into the world, he had need to go over it all again with a better comment, lest *the blind should lead the blind, and both fall into the ditch.*

They set forth their sense of it in so gross and carnal an exposition, as though all the commands forbid nothing else but external actions of sin, and required nothing else but the outward performance of duty; whereas our Lord Jesus Christ makes it appear to them by convincing reasons; Mat. v. that *he that breaks one of the commands of God but in thought, he is counted a breaker of the law in the sight of God*, the infinite Spirit, before whom our thoughts and intentions of mind, and all the motions of our hearts, are esteemed as our actual performances. They expounded away the law of God indeed, and they lost the beauty, the power, and the perfection of it by their comments. Our blessed Jesus came to restore it again. They made holiness to be a very little thing, and an easy matter; whereas our Lord shews, *it is exceeding hard to enter in at the strait gate*, and there needs labour and pains to travel onwards in *the narrow path* that leads to heaven.

Again, they dwelt much upon the ceremonial part of their religion, with too great a neglect of the moral part of it; but Christ insisted much upon the more substantial and *weighty matters of the law, righteousness and truth, piety and love.* The pharisees, who were devotees of their church, were careful *to pay tithes of mint, anise and cummin*, and doubtless their priests were *not backward to preach it*; but our Lord Jesus Christ *makes it his more constant care*, and his perpetual business, to

establish them in the spirituality and perfection of the moral law of God, and touches very little upon ceremonies, for he thought the scribes and pharisees did that sufficiently of themselves.

Again, they insisted upon *the traditions of the fathers, and councils, and inventions of men;* Christ, upon the commandments and words of God. And when any point of doctrine, and especially when any point of practice was in dispute, their recourse was to the fathers; what do the traditions say, what say the ancients? But our Lord Jesus Christ refers them still to some part of his Father's word, and quotes a text, either to prove a doctrine, or a duty.

Thus the teachers of the established church, in that day, instructed the people to build their hopes of heaven upon their natural birth, upon their relation to Abraham, and upon their passage through that original ceremony of *circumcision,* whereby they were initiated into the Jewish church, and thought they were made sufficient members of it for eternal happiness. Our Lord Jesus taught them to build ther hopes, rather upon *regeneration,* upon *faith and repentance,* upon the inward and mighty change of their souls, upon an alteration of their whole nature, and a turn of their hearts toward God, upon a humble confession of sins, and a dependence on the forgiving grace of God. In Mat. iii. we have a particular account what it was the pharisees taught them to build their hopes of heaven upon, viz. their being *children of Abraham;* and John the baptist, who was the fore-runner of our Lord, cuts off that hold; he nullifies that foundation, and makes it vanish. *Think not to say within yourselves, we are children of Abraham, but bring forth fruits of repentance,* verses 8, 9. And Christ, in John iii. 3, 5. shews, that *if a man be not born again,* let him pretend never so much to a birth of the family of Abraham, and to his passage through the initial rite of circumcision, the ordinance of that day, it was in vain for him to hope *to enter into the kingdom of God.*

They preached up the doctrine of justification by their own works, for *the pharisees trusted in themselves that they were righteous;* Luke viii. 9. and in their opinion, whoever would follow the rules of the pharisees, must be righteous, as well as they, in the sight of God, and thus go to heaven upon the foundation of their own duties. But our Lord Jesus Christ continually shews men the imperfection of their own righteousness, and their utter insufficiency to perform any obedience, for which they might be accepted of God to eternal life. He preached the gospel of salvation by the mercy and forgiveness of God his Father, and gave hints of his own atonement for sin, and his mediation with God, as far as was proper in that day and time.

They taught the people implicit faith in their doctors, or teachers and governors, and that they ought to believe as the church believes, not allowing too nice an enquiry into all the particular grounds of it. This evidently appears by the reply that these officers received from the chief priests; for when they acknowledged that *our Lord Jesus spake as never man spake*, the priests were ready to reprove them for giving too much credit to such a preacher as Christ was, What! Do ye believe? *Have any of the rulers, or of the pharisees, believed on him?* John vii. 48, 49. And will you dare hearken to a preacher, and doctrines, that the rulers and pharisees reject and renounce, and never gave you encouragement to depend upon? So the man that was born blind, John ix. when he argued with them, that *surely he must come from God*, that could cure one that *was born blind*, and restore him to sight again. *Thou wast altogether born in sin, say they, and dost thou teach us?* verse 34. *And they* excommunicated him, or *cast him out*. But our Lord, when he preaches to the multitude, he bids them all *search the scriptures; these are they that testify of me;* John v. 39. *If I speak not according* to the language of divine revelation, and *the word of God, believe me not;* I stand or fall by that test. Thus you see in numerous instances, notwithstanding our Saviour, and the scribes and pharisees, would all seem to take the bible for their text, yet how very different the matter or subject of their discourses were.

2. There was something in the manner of his preaching, that was different from the doctors of the Jewish church, as well as in the matter of it. Whether the Jews affected any pomp of oratory, or studied periods as the Greeks did, is hard to say; but it is certain, that our Saviour used the plainest and most simple style, that every one could understand: Our Lord conveyed the doctrines of the gospel to men, in such a manner, as was most suitable to attain his sacred purposes. Sometimes he spoke in parables, but with this design to cover under them such *mysteries of the kingdom* of heaven, as were not fit to be divulged in their full brightness and light at that day.

Few of the Jewish teachers preached from their hearts, when they preached pure and strict religion, for they practised very little of it. But our Lord never preached up any part of virtue or piety but what he practised. Nor when they insisted upon traditions and ceremonies, did they always perform them; for our Saviour complains, *they laid heavy burdens upon the people, which they would not touch with one of their fingers;* Mat. xxiii. 4. But our Lord Jesus Christ preached with the greatest sincerity, for he believed what he taught, and practised what he required.

They preached in a cold, dull and insipid way, as they

must do, because their hearts were not in their work. But our blessed Lord, had doubtless a solemn and awful air of unfeigned religion on his face, and piety and goodness sat on his countenance, while *the words of truth* and salvation were poured out from his lips. *He taught the things of God* to the people, as one that had zeal for God, and a tender and compassionate concern for the souls of men; his zeal appears sufficiently in the actions of his life; John ii. 17. *The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up,* it wasted his natural spirits. How warm was he in reproving sin, even the sins of the rulers and priests of the church in that day! How kind and melting was his language, in inviting sinners to repent and return to God! How large his promises of pardon, in the name of God his Father, *All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven to men!* Mat. xii. 31. How moving are his exhortations to faith and hope in himself! Mat. xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heaven laden, and I will give you rest. Come and take upon you my yoke and my burden, for my yoke is easy, and my burden light. Come and learn of me,* practise what I preach, and imitate what I do. The scribes taught by way of exposition, and poor expositors they were of divine revelation; and probably they never enforced holiness on the conscience with solemn and pathetic words; Christ *spake with authority,* as one that came from God, clothed *with power.* Mat. vii. 28. *The people were astonished at his doctrine, for he taught as one that had authority, and not as the scribes.*

3. Not only in the matter and in the manner of Christ's preaching, there was some difference from that of the doctors of the age; but thirdly, there was more difference between his preaching and theirs, in the power that attended his sermons, for *God was with him.* But the Jewish church was grown so degenerate, that though God himself did once establish it, yet now he had almost left and forsaken their priests and their teachers. There was an evidence and *demonstration of the Spirit,* that attended the words of Christ inwardly to the hearts and consciences of men. Therefore Christ could say concerning his preaching, *the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life*; John vi. 63. *The Spirit of God was given him without measure,* as John the baptist confessed concerning him. John iii. 34. *The Spirit of the Lord was upon him, the Lord had anointed him to preach the glad tidings* of salvation to men, *to unbind the captives,* and *to bind up those that were* wounded and *broken in heart,* as in Luke iv. 18. which he himself cites from the prophecy of Isaiah, which was spoken of old concerning him. *The Spirit of the Lord was upon him* and went with his words, that made the officers acknowledge, *never man spake like him*; for they had been used before

to a preaching without the Spirit, a preaching where the Spirit of God was hardly found: And when they came to a preacher with whom God was, no wonder they confessed something different between him and them. Now this power, this secret power, that attended the ministry of Christ, had various remarkable effects upon the hearers, which leads me to

II. The second general head proposed, that is, "what were the effects of the preaching of Christ, whereby it is further differenced from that of the Jewish doctors." And in this part of my discourse I shall range all my thoughts under these three heads; the effect it had upon the multitude, the effect it had upon his own chosen ones, and the effect that it had upon his enemies.

1. Let us consider the effect that his preaching had on the multitude. *It amazed them*, it gave them uncommon surprise; Mat. vii. 28. *The people were astonished at his doctrine.* They wondered, not only at his miracles whereby he confirmed his sermons, but at the sermons themselves. We have a very particular account of this in Mark vi. 2. *Many that heard were astonished, saying, whence hath this man these things?* It set many of them upon the enquiry, and upon a search of heart, what all this his doctrine might mean, and what they had of concern in it. They began to debate the case with themselves, whether he came from God, or no, and *whether this was the Christ*, or no. There was no such stir among the people while they attended upon the common sermons of the scribes, and the teachers of the Jewish church. They came back as they went, they sat unconcerned and unmoved. They heard the oration and the performance, they seemed perhaps to be pleased with some of those that pronounced better than their neighbours, and they went away unimproved, unless in uncharitableness against the followers of Christ, the new preacher, and in zeal for ceremonies, some of which also God had not instituted: These were the improvements of the church of the Jews, that attended upon the common preachers of that day.

When a nation had been a long time buried in ignorance and darkness, and been kept under by the sovereignty and policy of priests, and there springs up a new teacher among them, with some characters of divinity about him, they are all awakened and set upon the enquiry; they see the difference between their own dull hypocritical teachers, and the new Spirit of piety of and devotion. They never before troubled themselves about inward religion, but now there is a public open acknowledgment of something uncommon, and they are willing to consider, whether it be divine or no. Such was the case of the Jews when our Saviour was sent among them; such was the time of the reformation of this nation from popery; and those that

taught the gospel of Christ in that day, in opposition to the popish religion, were called new teachers, "as in Bishop Burnet's History," their ministry was very different from that of the Romish priests and friars, and people were set upon the enquiry, for God *opened their eyes*; *their doctrine was according to the gospel*, their form and manner of preaching was warm and zealous, practical and experimental, and the Spirit of God was with them.

This is therefore the first effect of the ministry of Christ, and will be the natural effect upon the multitude, when a divine preacher, that is distinguished from the common indolent teachers of the times wherein he lives, shall be called of God to preach in his name to sinners for the salvation of men.

2. Let us consider the effect that the preaching of Christ had upon his own chosen ones. It wrought a mighty and wonderful change upon them. Some of them were great and grievous sinners, and they were converted into saints. Some of them loved the world too well, but afterwards they loved God and Christ above all, and renounced this world, in the hope and pursuit of a better. *Mary Magdalene*, who is represented as a vile wretch, comes and sits *weeping at the feet of Jesus*, acknowledging her sins, she receives *large forgiveness*, and *loves her Saviour much*; Luke vii. 38, 47. Behold her now humble and mourning, in a quite different frame, form and temper, than what before you might have beheld her among the crowds of lewd persons. *Zaccheus the publican*, behold *he distributes his goods to the poor*, and *restores fourfold to those whom he had wronged* by his former violence, he comes and waits as a disciple of Jesus, receives this new doctrine, and accepts the salvation; Luke xix. 8. There was a power that attended the preaching of Christ, whereby they were effectually persuaded to give up themselves to his conduct. *Matthew forsakes the receipt of custom*, where perhaps he got many an unjust penny, to follow our Lord Jesus Christ, and abandon his gainful office. *Peter, Andrew, James and John, left their nets and fishing boats, and followed the Lord* at his call. Those that were ignorant were made learned in the truths of God, in the law and gospel. *The poor* of the people *received the gospel* and divine grace, and sinners were converted, sanctified and saved. Sublime and saving truths were they taught by the Father, under the preaching of Jesus his Son. *For flesh and blood did not reveal these things* to them, *but my Father which is in heaven*, says our Lord; Mat. xvi. 17. Now there were scarce any such instances at this time under the preaching of the Jewish doctors, because the Lord seemed to have left them: and their hearers being trained up in a formal and customary round of ceremonies, which they took to be true religion, they went on in a blind hope of the favour of

God, because they were Abraham's seed; but there were very few instances of conversion and regeneration under all their ministry.

3. Let us consider the effect that it had upon the enemies of Christ. It is evident that it convinced almost all of them inwardly, and many of them in their discourses with Christ were reduced to silence and shame; they had not one word to reply. They went away, *not daring to ask him any more* ensnaring *questions*, for their mouths were stopped; Mat. xxii. 46. The most impudent and the most learned of them fell together under his reproof, and the repetitions of the doctrines from his mouth they could not sustain. Some of his enemies who heard his discourses had their tempers a little softened towards him; those that designed to apprehend him, and went with that design, were inwardly restrained from touching him. So the officers in my text. Others again rose into a violent rage and envy, that their corrupt doctrines and their evil deeds were brought to light, and exposed before the people, and they hated him with more rancour, and pursued him even to the death.

III. I proceed now in the last place to make some inferences for our instruction, and for our practice. We will begin with lessons of instruction.

Lesson I. And the first is this, "that men may preach without commission from a national established church, and yet be owned of God." Such was the case of our Lord Jesus Christ in my text, and God discovered to the world how far he honoured him. Christ appeared like an upstart without a commission, for he was not sent forth from any of the schools of the prophets, or from under any of their public forms of teaching: Therefore they say concerning him, *as for this man we know not whence he is*; John ix. 29. He was looked upon as a schismatic in those days, as a sort of separatist from the established church, and all those that followed him, were opposed under that pretence. It was thought a sufficient refutation of his commission to preach; *Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees believed on him?* John vii. 48. But God sent a divine testimony into the hearts of those that heard him, and made them cry out, *Never man spake like this man.* It is no matter whence he comes, says the man, who felt his power opening his eyes, it is no matter whether he has authority from you, or no; for his miracles and his doctrine give sufficient attestation to his character, and his divine authority. When Peter and John, after the death of their master proceeded to publish the same doctrine which Christ had done, how were they railed at, and how furiously persecuted by the rulers of the Jewish church: But God was with them, and by their ministry he converted thousands. Look into Acts iv. 17, 18. and following. *Let us*, say the rulers of the Jews, *let us*

straitly charge and threaten these men, that they speak to no man henceforth in this name.

There were *Ananias and Caiaphas, John and Alexander, kindred of the high priest, with the rulers, elders and scribes,* as you find in the fifth verse; and they summoned these new preachers to appear before them, and *commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus; but Peter and John answered and said, whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken to you more than to God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard,* verses 19, 20. We that have had in our own souls a rich and divine experience of the power of these doctrines, and of this gospel, which we preach; we have such a divine testimony to the truth of them, that we cannot but publish them, whether you command or forbid us. God owned them with power, when they had *the* private *house shaken, where they were assembled together,* verse 31. *They were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and all spake the word of God with boldness.* Let us not therefore suffer ourselves to be imposed upon and terrified with the frightful name of schism, for our Lord Jesus Christ, and his apostles, had the same reproach. What if we do not worship according to the prescribed forms of those that are in power, yet if we worship according to the rules established by our Lord Jesus Christ, we can vindicate our consciences to him, and our consciences will not charge us another day, nor will our Lord reprove us. We have the example of our Lord Jesus Christ, and his followers, let us keep close to this pattern, and not be afraid.

II. We may learn from hence "the distinguishing power of the Spirit of God when it accompanies his own word," that it reaches the hearts of some with powerful convictions, while others remain obstinate. *Some say, he deceives the people, and some would have laid hands upon him,* as in the verses before my text, but these officers were so struck with his doctrine, that they could not do it. The grace of God that attends his own word is sovereign, and delights with glory to distinguish itself amongst the hearers: Sometimes servants are convinced and wrought upon with mighty efficacy, when masters shall remain ignorant, and stupid, or be provoked to wrath and enmity against the preacher. The rich may blaspheme, while *the poor receive the gospel.* The rulers say, that he was *a deceiver,* but the officers, their servants, were satisfied there was something divine in his doctrine, *for never man spake like him.*

There are some, it may be, that go to the place of public worship, and hear sermons, in order to revile the doctrine and religion, and perhaps with a spiteful intent to do some mischief to those that publish it; but Christ shall over-rule them to gain good by the sermon, and turn their curse into blessing. These

officers came probably with wrath in their hearts, and with a design to revile Jesus, and lay hands on him, according to their orders; but they were constrained to turn away from him with innocent hands, and they fulfilled not their mischievous designs. There have been such examples in our days, when wicked men have come to blaspheme God and the gospel in his ministers, and to strike our Lord Jesus Christ through the sides of the pure professors of his faith and worship, and they go away believers; then is that glorious prophecy fulfilled, Is. lxv. 1. *I am found of them that sought me not.* And blessed be God that such instances are found in our assemblies, wherein our Lord Jesus Christ makes his divine power appear, and attests his gospel, according to our ministrations of it.

III. I infer also from this text and discourse, that "when God resolves to work by his Spirit with his word, he breaks through all oppositions and prejudices of every kind, and constrains the hearers to confess, as well as believe." The divine conviction strikes like lightning, through their hearts, and commands their lips to acknowledge the presence and power of God there. Now I shall exemplify this head by considering the particular characters of these officers, and survey what difficulties, and what prejudices they laboured under, when they came first to put themselves under the preaching of Christ, and we shall find this inference eminently true.

They were educated under the Jewish priests, and doubtless they had their heads full of notions concerning a glorious Messiah, and they wished for nothing more, than to bear some considerable office in the kingdom of that Messiah, if he should appear in their day; and this is not at all strange, if we reflect that this was the very mistake and the temptation of James and John, who were two apostles. But when they heard Christ preach, they must probably fall under convictions of a different kind, and be sensible *his kingdom was spiritual:* For he wrought powerfully upon their spirits, and seemed to give them another turn of mind, they confessed and acknowledged though he was mean in his appearance, and his character in the world was contemptible, though he carried nothing of greatness and magnificence with him, he might be the true Messiah, for they were sure *never any man spoke like him.* Again, they were supposed to be enemies in their hearts to Christ before they came; but when God and his grace was with them by the mouth of his Son, they felt their error, they were forced to acknowledge it, and they became his friends; and instead of delivering him up to the fury of their rulers, they screened him from their rage and violence, and let him go in peace.

They were under the dictates and authority of the high *priest and pharisees, and yet how* glorious was the power and

victory of the gospel over their spirits! They dared to disobey their lords and masters in this unrighteous command, to let go the man whom they sent for as a heinous criminal. As they were under a direct command to seize the Lord, so they were in danger of severe reproaches, and being turned out of their places, and perhaps of excommunication too, if they did not fulfil their orders: But the power which came with the word of Christ gave them courage, and they told their masters, they dared not seize such a man, a man that preached at that rate, *so as never man preached.*

Now when they not only had the obstacles and prejudices of their own irregular notions founded upon a long course of education, but *were enemies to Christ in their hearts*, and were under authority to lay hold of him, yet the power of God, in the mouth of his Son, brought them to confess there was something extraordinary in him, and to tell their rulers so too. All this gave a noble testimony to the mission of Christ.

Such sort of witness God was pleased frequently to give to the gospel of his Son, in the lips of his apostles, and his inspired preachers, in primitive times. Men who have *come into their assemblies, ignorant* of the gospel, and disbelievers of Christ, *have been convinced and judged* by the words which they heard, *the secrets of their heart have been manifested, they have fallen down and worshipped God, and confessed that God was in the midst of them of a truth*; see 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25. Some appearances of this kind have been also seen in our day, and among our fathers in their public labours; and perhaps as many mighty prejudices, and as great obstacles have been broken through by the almighty power of the word of God, in the lips of his ministers, who derive not their authority from the state. Such instances give a divine testimony to the words of the gospel which are published, though the preachers are not commissioned by the national establishment. If God give us his seal in such a powerful manner as this is, we will believe our authority is from God, and not question our commission.

IV. I infer, that the "first work of God upon the consciences of natural and carnal men, is very surprising to them." The officers seemed to be under astonishment, and cried out, *never man spake like this man.* Perhaps they were never under a sermon before, where the Spirit of God attended it, or where their consciences were in any measure awakened. And thus it is in our days, when persons are under the first conviction of sin and righteousness by the preaching of the word, they confess they never heard such words before.

Though the matter and the manner of Christ's preaching *was very different* from that of the scribes, yet I take the biggest *reason of the* exclamation of these officers, to be the attending

power of the Spirit working upon their consciences. So poor sinners, that have long sat under a formal and cold ministry, and attended twenty years or more upon it, because they were afraid to change their preacher, afraid of some terrible names of frightful reproach, and afraid lest they should change their worship to the name of schism, when they have ventured to go astray into some private worshipping assembly, and have heard a discourse whereby they have been awakened to see their sin, and their danger, and the way of salvation by the righteousness and the grace of Christ, they are brought as it were into a new world, they are amazed at what they see and feel, they say within themselves, "Is this the gospel of Christ? Then I never knew the gospel till this day." Such persons, under the first powerful impressions of God on their hearts, are so surprised, that sometimes they hardly know, whether it is the voice of God, or man; like Samuel, when he was first called to be a prophet, knew not the voice of God. They are amazed like the woman of Samaria, when she met with our Saviour; John iv. 29. *Come see a man who told me all things that ever I did. Is not this the Christ?* Under such an amazement have stupid and ignorant creatures fallen, when they have been first awakened to see the state of their own souls, and the salvation of the gospel in a powerful and converting light, that they have wondered at the preacher, as though he were some extraordinary person, when perhaps his talents were not uncommon; but the Spirit of God was with him, and commanded divine light to shine into the darkness of their souls, and at this they have been surprised, and been ready to cry out, *never man spake like this man.* But I shall insist no longer on these heads, but proceed to some inferences for our practice.

Inference I. First, I would draw an inference that concerns ministers who have not commission from a national church, "that they should see to it that they have a call and a commission from God, and imitate our Lord Jesus Christ in the discharge of it." It is not my business here, my text does not naturally lead me to it, to enquire into all the particulars that make up the call and commission of a gospel minister; but it is the business of each of us, when we are well satisfied in our call to the ministry, to imitate this glorious preacher Christ Jesus. Let us set before us his example, who had received no orders from the Jewish priesthood, especially when we are among a people, who think we are not called to preach, because we have no ordination from an established church. In general we should avoid those things in our ministry, wherein we have just reason to fear others have been mistaken, and for which God hath contended with them, or departed from them. Not that we should seek after something *novel, and out of the way, on purpose* to avoid their method, or

reject any thing in the course of our ministry, merely because they teach or practise it; this would be highly irrational and improper. But when we find their matter of discourse, or their method of ministration hath been unblessed of God, or unsuccessful for the good of men, we have reason to see and enquire, whether there is not a more proper way of preaching to attain the great ends of the ministry, even the glory of God, the honour of Christ, and his gospel, with the conversion and salvation of poor sinful souls. This was the practice of the Son of God when he became a preacher among men, and let him be our pattern.

If others therefore in the matter of their ministrations, insisting much on the moral law, have given too narrow explications of it, and have not informed the people of the spiritual perfection of it, let us preach it up in the perfect purity of its demands, and in the severity of its threatenings; let us imitate our Lord Jesus Christ, and publish this holy law in its spirituality, and its terrors to awaken, convince and persuade men. If others have insisted most upon the ceremonies of worship, and established forms, and endeavoured to bind down the consciences of men to their inventions, or to *the traditions of their fathers*, which God never approved of, let us insist upon the command of God alone, and upon those rites and forms of worship only which he hath instituted: If others have preached up the sufficiency of *baptismal washing*, instead of *regeneration by the holy Spirit*, and led their hearers to a false presumption, that they are *born of God*, because they have been baptized, let us follow the doctrine of the blessed Jesus, who requires every *man to be born again, to be born of the holy Spirit, as well as of water*, and to be made a new creature in heart as well as in life, in order to *enter into the kingdom of God*. If we have found that others have been cold and indolent in their ministrations, and have been greatly defective in their zeal for God, if they have had too little concern for the souls of men, and too great an indifferency for the salvation of perishing sinners, let us double our zeal, let us be more earnest in labouring to save sinful creatures, and to bring saints nearer to God, and to build them up in faith and holiness. If we should have reason to fear the Spirit of God is much departed from others, let us cry with great earnestness, that the Spirit may never leave our assemblies, and abandon us to labour in vain without his influences. Let us long for the presence of that Spirit in our secret studies, as well as in our public ministrations of the gospel, which alone can make a Paul, or an Apollos, *to plant and water* with success.

And this may be a way, not only to do more service to God, *and do more* good to the souls of men, but this may be means, *in the providence* of God, to secure us from the rage of men too.

Let us remember, that when the chief priests, and rulers, and and pharisees, sent to apprehend our Lord Jesus, for preaching such doctrine as did without their commission, the officers who were sent, were impressed in their consciences with sudden convictions under his sermon, and they would not seize him. And God may give such instances of deliverance as divine attestations to our preaching, if we keep close to the example of our Lord Jesus, and have much of his Spirit with us.

II. The next practical inference, is addressed to those who attend such ministers as have no commission from the established church: If ye have found spiritual edification from our labours, you may be encouraged to proceed. Such were many of the people who attended on the sermons of Christ, *in the days of his flesh.* They were sufficieutly vindicated in this their following after him, not merely by the miracles that he wrought to prove his divine commission, but by the convincing, converting and sanctifying influence which accompanied his preaching. Let this appear in your whole conversation, in order to vindicate our ministry, and your attendance.

Was it said, even by the officers of the ecclesiastical court, concerning him, *Never man spake like this man,* let it be said by all the world concerning you, " never men lived better than you do." Let it be acknowledged in the eyes even of all those that hate you, that the lives of none of them are comparable to your lives for strict holiness and religion. And this will give a conviction to the hearts of men, and go a great way to justify your preachers, and your attention to their sermons. This justified the officers to their own consciences, in their neglect to seize Christ the Lord, though they could not learnedly make out his commission: Nor could they give, it may be, a very rational account of the preference of Christ to their national and established preachers, yet they could say: we have felt something in our hearts from this man's preaching, that we never felt from the preaching of other men, therefore we could not seize him, we durst not apprehend him, we believe he hath something divine in him.

It may be, many of you know not how to argue upon the reasons of your separation, or non-conformity, but if you feel such inward evidence in your hearts, and if the evidence witnesses also in the holiness of your lives, and runs through all your conversation, if you have felt in the sermons of those that are not commissioned, some divine influences that you never felt elsewhere, then you will say, *these are the servants of the most high God;* and without any particular reflections upon the public church, or the public way of worship, you

will have abundant reason to keep close to those teachers where you have felt conviction and sanctification under the word. When it shall be enquired, *What do you more than others?* let there be a fair and glorious answer ever at hand, that is legible in your lives by all mankind; let the grace of God in your heart, and abounding virtue and piety in your lives speak for you, that you attend upon men who do not preach as others do, and that you are made to live such lives as others do not live. Let your christian government of yourselves in sobriety, in temperance, in abstinence from the lusts of the flesh, in mortification to this world, and deadness to the vanities of this life, plead for you and for your preachers. Let it appear you are taught better than others by your living better than the rest of men, in faithful, just, and merciful behaviour towards your neighbours, in strict honour and honesty, in purity of life, in innocency and usefulness among your fellow-creatures. Let it appear that you bind yourselves to the rules of morality and piety, stronger than others do, even by the death of Christ, and the love of God in Christ Jesus, whose sacred name as a Mediator, a ruler and a divine pattern, is ever dwelling on the lips of your preachers.

O never let it be said concerning you, that you are ready to cheat in your traffic, that you are apt to deal deceitfully in your merchandize, and that you are prone to outwit others, and to undermine them in the management of your secular affairs. Never let it be charged upon any of you in your trades, that you screw down the seller, and strain up the buyer, to extravagant and unreasonable prices for your covetous and exorbitant gain. But let all be open and generous, plain and simple, without fraud, and without extortion; such as may honour the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and give a character of honour too, to that ministry upon which you attend, since it has not national and established ordinations and honours. Let your carriage towards God in your secret worship, and your public attendance upon divine ordinances, be of a piece with your conversation in the world; let it be known by the heavenly and holy temper of your spirits, that you *are the sons of God*, that your hearts are renewed, your souls are changed from what they were by nature, and your lives are gloriously different from the lives of others, and thereby give honour to the gospel that is preached among you.

This will enable you to bear the reproaches of schism and separation from a national church; but how can you bear them, if you have not something that carries you above these reproaches? Can you be content to be as loose, as vain, as careless in your manners towards God, and towards your neighbour, as others are, and yet to give yourselves all

trouble of separation from them in worship, and bear the oaches of this separation? This is not acting wisely, it not quit cost; here you run a certain risk, and yet you all the profit you might hope for. If therefore you chuse ttend upon such a ministry as has not the public commission, it be said concerning you, "No men live like these ;" that even those that avoid and fly from your assemblies, who never have heard your ministers, may yet be able to from your lives, that "Other men speak not as these men k." Amen.

DISCOURSE II.

A Sermon preached at the Separation of Two Deacons to their Office.

1 Tim. iii 13.—For they that have used the Office of a Deacon well, purchase to themselves a good Degree, and great Boldness in the Faith which is in Christ Jesus.

As there is a divine order in the invisible church, and the whole management of that large spiritual family is conducted by rules of divine wisdom, so the Lord hath appointed a beautiful order in his visible church; and in his book he hath given us *the pattern of his house, and the manner of the* officers and *ordinances thereof;* at least the biggest lines of it are drawn fair and plain, though some of the lesser circumstances may be more obscurely expressed. By a due study of the scriptures, and the exercise of our common reason, we may find a rule to guide us, in the most considerable and necessary affairs that belong to the constitution and regulation of the house of God.

Christ himself, *the Son of God, dwelling in flesh is the head, the chief shepherd* and overseer *of* all *his* visible *church* upon earth; for he wears a visible body, though for a season he be departed from our sight, and dwells in heaven; thither he ascended to *receive the promise of the Spirit, and to bestow gifts upon men;* Acts ii. 23. and Eph. iv. 8, 11. By these gifts he furnished persons, and fitted them to sustain offices of an ordinary or an extraordinary character. The extraordinary officers were apostles and prophets, and some suppose evangelists also, these were to continue only for a season; the ordinary are pastors and teachers, elders and deacons, which are to continue through all ages of the church.

To omit all the disputes that have been raised how far pastors, teachers, elders and bishops or overseers differ from one another. I shall at present consider all the ordinary church officers, as included under these two names *bishops and deacons.* For thus the apostle seems to include them; Phil. i. 1. The visible church of Christ on earth is composed of spirits dwelling in flesh, and as the bishops or overseers chiefly exercise their care toward the soul or spiritual part, so the chief care of the deacons seems to relate to the body, and things belonging to it: And as there are some special persons in the church, to whose outward welfare the care of the deacon must be extended, so the whole church, con-

sidered as a society meeting together for worship, will need some conveniences for the outward performance of that worship, which seems to be another part of the deacon's business. But I proceed to pursue my discourse according to the text, whereby this will appear with more evidence.

There are these three things contained in the words:—I. The office itself.—II. The due discharge, or performance of it, and—III. The encouragement, or reward.

I. First, the office itself. Under which we shall consider four things, viz. The business of it; the reason of its institution; the duration of it; and the ordinary method of investing a person with it.

i. The business of a deacon is expressed very briefly in Acts vi. 2. *To serve tables*, or to manage affairs that relate to the provision for the table of the poor, to which are added in the general construction of the words, the table of the ministers, and the table of the church at the Lord's-supper. The poor oftentimes make a considerable part in christian churches. In the beginning *the poor received the gospel.* And thus it is still, *not many rich, not many noble are called, but God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom;* 1 Cor. i. 26, 28. and James ii. 5. Now as it is the duty of the rest of the church, and especially of *the rich, to communicate* toward the supply of the wants of their poor brethren, so it is the proper business of the deacons to receive and to distribute these supplies; and no doubt but it is their duty to excite and exhort those whom they see negligent, and to urge them to the performance of these works of love and piety.

The table, or outward support of the ministers, ought to be provided by the church also. 1 Cor. ix. from the 4. to the 14. verse. *The Lord hath ordained, that they that preach the gospel should live of the gospel.* And it seems very convenient, that one or more persons should be deputed to see this performed, that so the ministers may not be too much exposed to a solicitude about outward things, nor their cares too much laid out upon the necessaries of the life of their bodies, while they should rather be devoted, or entirely *given up to the word of God and prayer*, for the service of souls. Besides, if the ministers of the church were forced to expect and receive the several portions of their maintenance from the several persons of the church, their own collection of it would take up too much of their time, would expose them to the censure of covetousness and greediness, would too much impose upon their modesty, or would make their maintenance fall short.

And I might add also their subsistence, which is but an act *of justice due from the church*, would look too much like mere *charity, and appear too precarious* and dependent; and their

obligations to particular private persons, would too much expo them to the temptation of partiality, in the exercises of the ministrations, and their pastoral care. Whereas this is forbidd to ministers; 1 Tim. v. 21. *Do nothing by partiality.* W might be more afraid to reprove some that were rich and kin and more negligent in comforting and instructing others th were poor, and could give but little. But when the minist receives his support from the church in general, by the hand the deacons, as officers of the church, then he is much mo secured from these temptations. And no doubt it is the duty the deacons to see to it, that each member of the church perfor their part toward the support of the ministry; for it hard seems decent for the minister himself to urge this duty on t people*. *The table* of the church *at the Lord's-supper*, is mai tained by the contributions of the church. The bread and wi must be bought at the public expence, but particularly pr vided for by the deacons, who in short are *stewards* of the temporal affairs that relate to the church, even as t bishops and elders are of the spiritual; and both under o *Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great pastor* of pastors, a churches, and the feeder of his own poor, and provides all thin for all.

I might add to these, that the business of a deacon seem also to extend to some care of the place of public worship, an all the necessaries that belong to the outward service of t Lord, such as tables, seats, vessels for bread and wine, and f water in baptism, &c. For though these things are not part cularly expressed among the businesses of a deacon, yet th will never be performed, unless some one or more persons deputed for this service; and who can be more proper perso than those, who by divine institution are entrusted with the co tributions of the church. Yet in most of these affairs it is nece sary to advise with the pastor, and with the whole church, and every important matter to take their direction; for the deaco are but *stewards*, and not proprietors or possessors of the church treasure, nor are they *lords* of the temporal things relating to t church.

ii. The reason of their institution, which is to assist t ministers or elders of the church in the care of all those thing which if devolved entirely upon the elders, would hinder the from their proper business, viz. *the word and prayer. The apo tles, who were the elders and rulers of the church at Jerusale* at that season, managed the affairs of collection and distributi at first. Acts iv. 35. "The disciples brought the money a laid it down at the apostles' feet, and there was a distribution

* *There is a very good discourse on this subject, viz.* "The Maintenan *of a Christian Ministry,*" published by Mr. David Rees.

every one according to their need." But Acts vi. 1, 3, *When the disciples were multiplied*, the elders could not take care of all the poor; therefore the order of deacons was instituted in the next verse; and we find in Acts xi. 30. That the elders, or ministers, were not utterly divested of all power or care of the contributions, for Paul and Barnabas themselves received *the contributions of the church at Antioch*, to be disposed of to *the poor saints in Judea*: And Acts xii. 25. *Barnabas and Saul* are said to *return from Jerusalem, having fulfilled this service*, τὴν διακονίαν, this work of a deacon, as it is in the original. So that as the ruling elders probably are helps in government, as the teachers are helps in doctrine and catechising, so the deacons are helps to the pastor in the management of all the outward and temporal affairs that relate to the church's welfare. Now if these things are so, the following consequences will arise:

1. That in churches which are very small, there is no absolute necessity of such officers, as ruling elders or deacons: for the pastor may perform all the services necessary in that church, with some very little assistance from the brethren, at such special occasions, wherein his own modesty may excuse him, or his other labours prevent him. It is plain the deacons were not chosen, till "disciples were multiplied." 2. As pastors and ruling elders are not utterly divested of the care of the poor by the institution of deacons, so the deacons ought not to determine any thing of considerable importance, without consulting the elders, as I have hinted before; nor in affairs of this kind of the biggest moment, ought any thing to be determined by elders and deacons, without the cognizance and approbation of the church, for in these temporal things we are all but stewards of what the church entrusts us with. 3. Hence perhaps we may borrow another argument for the extent of the deacon's care, that is, that it reaches to all those things of a temporal nature, wherein the brethren of the church may help the elders; for this is the very design of the deacon's office, lest the elders, or ministers of the church, might be too much interrupted in their "continual attendance on the word and prayer;" and especially where there are no ruling elders chosen to assist the pastor or teacher, in managing church affairs, the care of the deacons seem still to be more extensive for the help of the pastor. And perhaps the word *helps*, 1 Cor. xii. 28. may have some reference to these offices of ruling-elders and deacons.

iii. The duration of this office. Doubtless it was designed to continue throughout all ages of the church, which appears from these two reasons:

I. *The objects of their care* always continue. The poor ye have always with you; John xii. 8. And *ye shall always have*

them to exercise your charity and compassion; Deut. xv. 11. And in large churches the temporal affairs thereof will be too heavy a burden for the ministers to sustain, and therefore they will need the assistance of deacons. Besides, the provision for their own support, and for the table of the Lord, will be always necessary, while we minister before the Lord in garments of flesh, and while the table of the Lord must be furnished with bread and wine, and other necessaries, in order to participate thereof.

II. They are mentioned by the apostle Paul, as stated officers of the churches, and directions given concerning their character, their behaviour and management, as there is concerning other standing officers and affairs of a church. It may be added also, that if they were thought necessary to the primitive churches, in the age of miracles, and the age of love, when God took special care of his ministers, and excited all the members of a church, to a mutual care of one another, and of the poor, much more necessary are these officers in all the following ages, when ministers must acquire and improve their gifts by hard study, and cannot maintain themselves *by the work of their hands*, and when the *charity* and mutual care of church members *waxes cold*, and need some persons to be appointed for this very business.

iv. The way of their constitution, or how persons are to be invested with this office; which seems to be performed by these five things: 1. By enquiring amongst the members of the church, who come nearest to the characters that are given of a deacon; Acts vi. 3. "Men of honest report, full of the Spirit, and of wisdom;" 1 Tim. iii. 8. "Grave, not double-tongued, not given to wine, not greedy of filthy lucre, holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience." Unto these I might add, that prudence will direct us to chuse such persons who are not very poor, lest the stewardship of the church's money should be a temptation to them. Not mean or despised in the church, lest they want due courage and sufficient influence upon their brethren for the management of their office. And they should be persons capable of admonishing the rich, and of comforting the poor, even as their business is to converse with both, to receive from the one, and distribute to the other. They should also be persons whose temper is compassionate, and who have as it were a natural care for the good of the church, and such as have some leisure hours, and who are not so overwhelmed with the cares and constant business of this life, but they may now and then devote their thoughts, and their hours, to the service of the church of Christ. 2. They must be proved before they are fixed in this office; 1 Tim. iii. 10. I do not conceive this to intend their management of the deacon's office, by way

of experiment for a year or two; but rather a farther character of the persons chosen. Let them be such as are of some considerable standing in christianity, whose character and conversation has been proved and found blameless, and fit for such an office. It seems to signify the same with that character of a *bishop*, verse 6. *That he must not be a novice*, that is, not one that is lately converted, or lately received into the christian church. 3. They must be chosen by the church; Acts vi. 3. *Brethren, look ye out among you seven men*, &c. The pastors, or elders, must not chuse them without the church, for the apostles themselves, who were inspired, would not determine the persons, but left the church to chuse them, to shew us the stated method of chusing ordinary officers in a church. 4. They must accept of the call of the church, and that freely, and they must solemnly devote themselves to the service of Christ and the church. For all the subjects and servants of Christ in his visible kingdom must be voluntary, and the office of a deacon must be undertaken *willingly, and not by constraint*, even *as the office of a bishop;* 1 Pet. v. 2. 5. They must be devoted and separated to this work by the solemn prayers of the church, and seeking the divine benediction upon them in the discharge of their office. So were *Paul and Barnabas separated to the work of the ministry* amongst the Gentiles; Acts xiii. 2, 3. And so the deacons to their office; Acts vi. 6.

Here note, that the elder, or elders of the church, ministers and teachers, are to be the chief agents in this affair. So you find the apostles and teachers were the chief agents in the two texts just cited: And as ministers may pronounce a benediction, or blessing in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, so perhaps here it may be proper for the minister to pronounce them blessed, if they faithfully perform this office, as well as to pray for a divine blessing upon them.

The great dispute and enquiry, whether imposition of the hands of elders in this benediction, is now necessary, as in the primitive times, may be thus resolved: In many scriptures, where imposition of hands is mentioned, there were extraordinary and miraculous gifts conferred: You find this in Stephen and Philip, two of the first deacons, and you frequently find the Holy Ghost conferred on men by this ceremony; Acts viii. 17, 18. and chapter ix. 17—19. Nor can I find one plain and certain instance of hands imposed in the primitive churches, where we are sure it was but an ordinary separation to an office without any extraordinary gifts conferred, or an inspired and effectual benediction given by an inspired person. Therefore I cannot conceive it necessary to be now practised; for if it had been necessary, surely there would have been some more certain direction and command for it. But since there is so much

colour given to it by some examples or expressions in scripture, where we cannot certainly prove that extraordinary gifts were conferred, we leave every church, and every elder, to their own liberty of opinion and practice; and those that will impose hands in such a way of benediction, upon any chosen officers in a church, shall never be censured by me, nor dare I pronounce it idle or unlawful. Yet still I think, if there be any elder or elders, in that particular congregation to which they belong, these are the most proper persons to perform such a ceremony.

I would add here, that as there were many sorts of consecration of old in Jewish times, by washings, sprinklings, water, fire, &c. In the New Testament things are said to be *sanctified by the word and prayer;* 1 Tim. iv. 5. And therefore some useful instructions and exhortations from the word of God, seem very proper at the consecration of a bishop, or of a deacon, as well as prayer. Let us proceed to the

II. Second thing expressed in the text; that is, to shew how the persons ordained may attain to a good performance of this office of a deacon. Then a man *uses the office of a deacon well,* when,

1. He does it with sincere design for the honour of God, and zeal for the good of the church. This *single eye,* this sincere aim, ought to attend every action of a christian, and especially every part of the practice of a church officer, whose business has a more direct design of this end, and should have a more immediate and manifest tendency toward it. *Simplicity and godly sincerity* should run through the whole course of services in a church, without *fleshly wisdom* and carnal interests.

2. With diligence and care: When *Artaxerxes the king* gave command to the treasurers of his state, which are much the same as deacons in a church, to assist Ezra the priest in building the temple, he charges them, "Whatsoever is commanded by the God of heaven, let it be diligently done for the house of the God of heaven;" Ezra vii. 23. Let this be a reproof to each of us, when we are negligent about any thing in the church of God. Deacons should not only supply those wants that are made known to them, but be careful in enquiring into the necessities of the church, whether such persons may not want relief, who are too modest to burden the church, or ask support of the public. Whether Onesiphorus was a deacon or no, is not certain, but he fulfilled the office of a deacon, διακονος, both in Ephesus and at Rome, when "he sought out Paul diligently, and often refreshed him, and ministered unto him in many things; 2 Tim. i. 16—18. The number of deacons is not determined in scripture, but so many ought to be chosen, whose due diligence, according to their circumstances, may answer the necessities of the church, *without being* overburdened themselves.

3. The office of a deacon must be performed with prudence and discretion: Distinguishing who are poor indeed from those who are covetous and pretendedly poor; "that the church be not charged more than is necessary;" 1 Tim. v. 16.

4. With faithfulness to the church and to the poor, and to the ministry: For in all cases *it is required of stewards that they be faithful*; 1 Cor. iv. 2. Distributing the contributions for the several services of the church, according to the design for which it is given by the church, is their duty.

5. *Without partiality.* Not neglecting any part of their office, or the service of any of these tables to which they are called, but laying by all carnal respect; 1 Tim. v. 21. *Distributing to the poor*, according to the degree of their poverties and necessities, whether these be constant or occasional: And this must be done with an impartial view, *without preferring one before another*, upon any selfish or carnal considerations.

6. With *chearfulness and not grudgingly*; Rom. xii. 8. "He that sheweth mercy, let him do it with chearfulness, he that ruleth, with diligence; which words seem to be spoken concerning the deacons and elders of a church. They ought not to be lavish of the church's money, nor ought they to be fond of saving, and too thrifty, lest the poor be grieved, and the church dishonoured by the hardships which any of their members suffer.

7. With gentleness and compassion. Treating the poor kindly, in imitation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who condescended to the meanest, and pitied the poor: His servants they are, his deacons, and he expects they should take tender care of his members, not using them roughly, nor speaking hard things to them, lest their spirits be broken.

8. I cannot but think that occasional instructions, admonitions, consolations and prayers, with, and for the poor, ought to accompany the performance of a deacon's office; for these things are in some measure the duty of every christian, as it is frequently intimated by St. Paul; and much more surely of those who bear an office in the church, and who are called to a more particular acquaintance with the state of it, and converse with the members of it; and especially when it is a piece of their character, that *they must hold the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience*; that is, they must be men of a good acquaintance with the great truths of the gospel, and of an unblemished character for sincerity and piety. It is certain, that as they are entrusted with the temporalities of the church, and know when there are any deficiences with regard to the table of the minister, or the poor, it is their duty to admonish the members, and especially the rich among them to do their part toward the supply of their wants. It may be observed, that the first deacons had extraordinary gifts *of the Spirit, and* were eminently furnished for

such work, as exhortation and prayer. Philip and Stephen, who were two of the first seven deacons of the church at Jerusalem, were preachers of the gospel. Compare Acts vi. 5. with verses 9. 10. and Acts viii. 5. And in the account which St. Paul gives us of deacons in my text, all of them have such an honourable encouragement of arriving at higher degrees in the church, as gives us, reason to suppose they were sometimes employed in some ministerial services relating to the spiritual state of the poor, as well as their temporal necessities. And yet it must be still granted, that the original design of the institution of deacons, was to assist the pastors in the ministration to the necessities of the poor, and distribution of the monies which were collected for this purpose, and not to preach the gospel publicly, though the first deacons having extraordinary gifts, were often so employed.

III. The third thing, in the text, is the encouragement given to the due performance of a deacon's office. It is said by the apostle, " they purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus."

The late reverend and learned Doctor Owen believes this καλὸν βαθμὸν, or *good degree and confidence in the faith*, to signify no more, but a place or seat of some eminency in the church assemblies, which is due unto such deacons, where with boldness and confidence they may assist in the management of those affairs of the church which belong unto the profession of *the faith which is in Christ Jesus*; but he adds, " If any shall rather think, that both of those expressions do signify an increase in gifts and grace, which is a certain consequence of men's faithful discharge of their office in the church wherein many deacons of old were eminent unto martyrdom, I shall not contend against it." Others think that καλὸν βαθμὸν, or *good degree*, signifies the office of the presbytery, which they obtain by a due performance of the office of a deacon. If I might give my conjecture, I would explain it these two ways:

1. They obtain a good degree of honour and respect from the elders, for the assistance which they give them in church affairs; from the poor, for their compassion and tenderness toward them, and supply of their wants; and from the whole church, for their fidelity, wisdom and diligence in the management of all the temporal affairs that relate to the church, for the honour of the gospel, and conveniency of the members.—2. By conversing much with the elders of the church, by acting in concert with them, by visiting the poor, and performing private christian services towards them, such as exhortation, consolation, and prayer, and by a constant acquaintance and observation of church affairs, they acquire greater knowledge, they improve their gifts and their graces, they grow bold to speak of the

faith of Christ more publicly, and have taken a good degree, or a good step, towards the office of a ruling, or a teaching elder, in the church.

And this is a very proper expression concerning those times, when christian churches were the only schools for the education of ministers; and the exercise of gifts, in and for the service of the church, was one chief means of their preparation for it. I confess in our day, since we have many outward advantages for the education of ministers in learning, and their improvement in knowledge, and in all gifts, it is not so usual, nor so necessary, that a deacon should grow up into an elder, or bishop. Yet in some churches, such persons have been found in late years, who have been deservedly called to the office of the ministry, by the great improvement of their gifts in the church, their uncommon degree of knowledge and grace, and the peculiar blessing of God. After all, this is certain, that those that grow old in such an office, well performed, grow honourable *in the sight of God and man*; for *God is not unrighteous*, my friends, *to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name; in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister, and we desire that every one of you would shew the same diligence unto the end;* Heb. vi. 10—12.

Inferences.—I. We may see something of the beauty of gospel-order, in the several offices of a church of Christ; but I shall now remark it only in these two respects:—1. That as the visible church here on earth, and the members of it, have many bodily necessities and conveniences to be supplied, as well as their souls to be instructed and edified; so there are distinct persons of divine appointment commissioned to manage these affairs, and fulfil these services, viz. pastors and deacons.—2. Another part of the beauty of that order consists herein, that the one is to act in subordination to the other; the deacons are chosen for the assistance of the elders, and thus acting together by a sweet concurrence, the church is preserved in peace, the necessities of it are supplied, and the gospel honoured.

II. See here the tenderness of Christ, the great head of the church towards his ministers, and his poor: He has instituted officers to take care of their outward subsistence, as well as required the church to contribute for that end. Hereby the poor will not be left to perish, nor ought they to be exposed to extreme hardships, if the church can prevent it: Hereby ministers are secured from a too great solicitude about their own maintenance, and from interruptions in their more proper work, as well as from the malicious censures of the world, which would fall upon them, if they were over-burdened with secular cares and concerns, either for the church, for the poor, or for themselves.

III. Learn from my text, that the services which are done

for Christ and the church, have their rewards annexed to them for their encouragement in this world, besides the infinite recompence of reward in the world to come. Faithful deacons in the church, obtain *a good degree* of honour and esteem.

IV. From the deacons of a particular visible church, we may raise our thoughts unto our Lord Jesus Christ, who is the great minister; and *bishop of souls;* and I may call him too, the great and universal deacon of God the Father in the church invisible. The Father *has given into his hand* the riches of his grace, *the treasures of his love*, divine *food* and spiritual *clothing*, *mansions* of glory and *inheritances in light;* to be distributed amongst his poor saints, that they may be *nourished* and brought through this *wilderness*, and that they may be enriched with grace, be brought home to heaven, and be for ever blessed. He is diligent and faithful, he is wise, and gentle, and compassionate, and answers all the characters of a deacon in the highest degree. He spreads a table for starving sinners, and furnishes it with *his own flesh and blood*; he feeds us with *the bread of life*, and with *living water*, that we may eat, and drink, *and live for ever*. And in this sense, when the deacons are serving tables, and supplying the wants of the poor, and the church visible, out of what is trusted with them; let them remember and rejoice, that they represent the character of our Lord Jesus, as he is entrusted with all supplies from the hands of the Father, and distributing unto the church invisible. To him let the eyes of your faith be lifted for wisdom, for gifts and grace, to manage the affairs with which you are entrusted, and he shall fulfil the promises of a large reward. Amen.

DISCOURSE III.

Invitations to Church-fellowship.

PSALM lxv. 4.—Blessed is the Man whom thou chusest and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy Courts: We shall be satisfied with the Goodness of thy House, even of thy Holy Temple.

THE latter words of the verse shall be the subject of our present meditations, wherein we shall consider what is meant by *dwelling in the courts of God*, and what is *the goodness of his house* wherewith his favourites *shall be satisfied*. There are three senses of this sacred phrase, *dwelling in the courts of God*; and the persons who are favoured to inhabit the sanctuary in either of these senses, may have the blessing of the Psalmist pronounced upon them.

The first, and the most obvious meaning of the words, *dwelling in the courts of God*, is, a continual attendance on him in the ministrations of his temple, and the discharge of some holy office there. This was the felicity of several of the priests and the Levites of old under the Jewish dispensation: And this is the happiness of the ministers of the gospel now, who are continually employed in the things of God, and the affairs of religion; *who give themselves up*, as the apostles did, *to the ministry of the word and prayer*; Acts vi. 4. Whose business it is to *attend to reading, to exhortation, and to doctrine*, to meditate on God and Christ and salvation, to converse with the glorious invisibles of the upper world, and *give themselves wholly to them*, as the apostle charges Timothy the young evangelist; 1 Tim. iv. 13, 15. *Blessed is the man whom God chuses* for a christian and a minister, whose general calling, in common with the rest of christians, is to *save his own soul*, and whose particular employment as a minister is *to save the souls of others*. This order of men are utterly unworthy of their privilege, if they do not prize it highly, set a just value upon it, and confess their own happiness. But I have shewn elsewhere, that this sense of the words, which is limited to priests and Levites, could never include the whole meaning of David; for then he had excluded himself from this blessedness, who *was not of the tribe of Levi*, nor capable of priesthood; and yet he declares with holy joy, that he *would dwell in the house of the Lord for ever*; Psal. xxiii. 6.

The second sense of the words therefore, and which seems to be the very design of the Psalmist is this; *Blessed are they* "whose habitation is near to the ark of God, and the tabernacle," and thereby "they are made capable of frequenting the

house of God, and of waiting upon him with great constancy in the holy ordinances of his worship." These are the persons whom my text pronounces happy: There was but one tabernacle, and one ark in the days of David, and but one temple in succeeding ages appointed for all the inhabitants of the land of Canaan; but one place where *God had recorded his name*, and appointed the public sacrifices, and peculiar solemnities of worship, on which *all the men of Israel*, who lived at the farthest distance, were obliged to attend *three times a year:* But those whose habitation was near the place where the ark resided, and these solemnities were performed, had more frequent opportunities of such attendance. The doctrine, which we may derive from this sense of the words, may be thus expressed.—"Happy are those persons whose circumstances and stations of life, are appointed by providence in so favourable a manner, as to give them liberty to come up constantly to the house of God, and wait upon him in all his institutions:" And the instances of their happiness are evident enough. For

Instance I. "These are nearer to the visits of God, and may see him oftener than others." These may have such a frequent sight of his *power and glory, as they are to be seen in the sanctuary;* Psal. lxiii. 2. It is a pleasure to be near our best friend, to be near our dearest Father, to be near our own God. When we have a relation dwells near us, how often we are present with them! And they that dwell near the court, have opportunity of seeing the king upon every occasion.

II. "These have more external helps towards heaven, than others have." It is true, we have a glorious mercy in this respect, that the scriptures are every where in our hands, and many labours of holy men in writing, *who being dead, yet speak;* but the ministry of the word in the house of God, is the great ordinance for conversion and edification. It is the chief standing institution of Christ for this purpose, even to the end of the world.

III. "These persons have supplies of their wants nearer at hand; and whatsoever their burdens be, they are nearer to relief;" whether their complaints are of a spiritual or temporal kind. How often has the soul that was in the dark and perplexed, received hints of direction in the ministry of the word! How often has the tempted christian been strengthened and supported there! And the mourning saint has been often comforted. And even when we labour under temporal necessities and sorrows, though the sanctuary is not furnished to supply every thing of this kind, yet the words of grace and consolation that have been heard in the church, have often borne up the spirit of the poor and the afflicted; they have been led to the mercy-seat, the spring of all supplies, and they have gone away patient under their burdens, *and rejoicing in hope* of deliverance here, or full salvation here-

after. We in this world are travelling through a wilderness, *a dry land*: Now to be near a sweet fountain, or rather to have a sweet stream flowing by us all the way, is a choice comfort; while those that are afar off die for thirst, or go many a long hour without supply; see Psal. lxiii. 1, 2. where David being afar off from the house of God, cries out aloud after him; *O God, thou art my God, early will I seek thee; my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; to see thy power, and thy glory, &c.*

Happy those who dwell near the celebration of divine ordinances, for these are the persons who stand fair to obtain all advantages of the house of God, and "to be satisfied with the goodness of his holy temple." Before I dismiss this second sense of the words, I shall make these two or three reflections:

Reflection I. "How much do these fellow-creatures want our pity, and our prayers, whose station places them afar off from the courts of God," and who are deprived of all the blessed advantages that are to be enjoyed in the church! Let us, whom divine providence has favoured with a nearer approach to God, fill his courts with the voice of joy and praise for our peculiar mercies; and let our hearts at the same time feel a becoming compassion towards those who are afar off. O pity those who dwell in the lands of darkness and heathenism, and have nothing near them that looks like religion, but the courts of idolatry, and their abominable rites and ceremonies; filthy ceremonies, and fantastic or cruel rites with which they worship *images of wood or stone*, and their brazen or their golden gods. Pity the wretches who dwell under antichristian tyranny, where every thing sacred is over-run with superstition, and the pure ordinances of the gospel are daubed over so thick with various painting, and so buried under a load of human inventions, as to diminish, if not utterly destroy, all their use and power. Pity the protestants whose places of worship are demolished, and the sanctuaries are thrown down all over their land. Pity the holy confessors that are banished from the courts of God and his beloved worship; and those who are shut up in prisons, inclosed in dungeons, under heavy bonds of iron; and those also who groan in secret in their own houses, under the terror of watchful and malicious persecutors. Let us put our souls in their soul's stead, and say then, "Would we not think ourselves fit objects for pity? And should we not desire the prayers of the saints of God?" Think then, christians, let you and I think with ourselves, who made the dreadful and the happy difference? Happy for us indeed, but dreadful for our brethren, who endure these banishments, or heavy bonds!

II. Here let us reflect again, "how much more excellent is the gospel-state, than that of the Levitical law! And how much

more happy are christians in England, than the Jews in Canaan! Here we have houses of God near us, churches assembling in every town. They were forced to travel *three times a year to Jerusalem*, many long and weary miles: It is true God refreshed them in their journies; Psal. lxxxiv. 5—7. He gave them showers of rain when they were faint or thirsty; but they *travelled through Baca*, that is, the valley of weeping; many wants and inconveniences attended them, and the difficulties and burdens of such a dispensation, were not light nor little. We may yet continue this reflection, concerning those who dwell in this great city, and say, "How great is the privilege the christians in London enjoy, above those who dwell in the distant villages, or in little solitary cottages in the country!" Here we have the gospel preached in every street, and places of worship at our right-hand and our left: We dwell as it were in the courts of God; but the poor villager must travel many a mile, and perhaps through miry ways, to attend on the nearest ministrations of the word; and in the mean time the young and the feeble of the family must be confined at home. O what advances in knowledge and grace, what growth in holiness, and what approaches to heaven are to be expected from those who dwell so near the places of divine worship, and where the provisions of heaven are brought to our very doors!

"O how desirable a thing it is to enjoy all such circumstances of life, as give us liberty to frequent the courts of God!" How much should we value, and how wisely should we improve such a blessing! Have a care of neglecting due seasons of worship, and be not negligent or unfrequent in your visits to the courts of God, lest he lay some heavy restraints upon you, and divide you from his sanctuary. He has bands and chains of various kinds to cast upon such slothful professors; persecution or sickness, loss of your limbs, or loss of your senses, whereby you may be cut off from the blessings of his church; or he may break up house and remove far from you, because you do not visit him; or he may place your tabernacle afar off from his own, and cut short your liberty; for it is he which *determines the bounds of your habitations;* Acts xvii. 26. O how unhappily are some persons overloaded with *the cares of this life!* How are they hurried and overwhelmed in a tumult of worldly affairs! And the business of their daily calling is too often ready to entrench upon divine hours and ordinances. How sore a distress is it to a pious christian to be confined and withheld from the courts of God, by long and tedious distempers of body! How painful is it to his spirit to lie languishing and faint on a bed of sickness, while others are made *to drink of the river of pleasure*, and refreshing streams of the sanctuary! They are sorrowful, while others *are made joyful in the house of prayer.* They are tast-

g *the wormwood and the gall*, while we feed on the pleasant ings of *the house of God, and are satisfied with the goodness of s holy temple.*

And thus I dismiss the second sense of the words, which obably was the precise meaning and chief design of the almist himself, considering the dispensation under which he ed. But when in the times of the New Testament, we apply e language of the Jewish prophets to the state and institutions the gospel, we have encouragement enough from the example Christ and his apostles, to extend and further enlarge the aning of those ancient phrases beyond the literal and Jewish se, and thus accommodate them to christian affairs.

The third sense of the text therefore, when enlarged and plained to evangelical purposes, may be this: Approaching to od, in the style of the gospel signifies, either our *being brought gh to God, and reconciled to him by the blood of Christ*, and e grace of the Holy Spirit, as in Eph. ii. 13, 18. *In Christ sus ye who were sometimes afar off are made nigh,—and have cess by one Spirit to the Father.* Or else it means our *drawing gh to God in spirit and in truth*, in prayer or holy meditation, c. So Heb. x. 21, 22. *Having such a high priest over the use of God, let us draw near with a true heart.*

Dwelling in the courts of God, may signify an union to the urch of God, which is his spiritual house, upon a solemn pro-ssion of his gospel, and a visible allowed right to all the privi-ges and ordinances thereof. The church is the *house of the ing God;* 1 Tim. iii. 15. He dwells no longer *in temples ade with hands*, nor confines his special presence to any single ot of ground, or any material building: The assemblies of his ints are his courts, his dwelling places; *where two or three are thered together in his name, there is Christ in the midst of em;* Mat. xviii. 20. Every particular church of Christ, as ell as the church catholic, or universal, is *a holy temple of the ord, built up for a habitation of God through the Spirit;* phes. ii. 20, 21. Now surely, if the men of Israel had a bles-ng pronounced upon them in my text, whose habitation was ar to that material sanctuary, we may with equal assurance, d with much greater delight, say, *Blessed is the man, O Lord, hom thou chusest and causest to draw near unto thee, that he ay dwell in thy house* in the sense of the New Testament; that may be *added to thy church;* Acts ii. 47. That *he may be ined to the disciples;* Acts ix. 26. That he may *be received in e Lord;* Phil. ii. 29. That he may be united to the christian semblies, and become a member of the church of Christ.

Let us again consider the Hebrew expression, האריך ישכן *at he may dwell in thy courts*, which may with more exactness and *priety be rendered, he shall or will dwell*, &c. and then the verse

will sound thus, *Blessed is the man whom thou chusest, and causest to approach unto thee; he shall dwell in thy courts*, as a promised privilege; or he will do it as a voluntary and delightful practice; in which latter sense, the words will afford this doctrine.

Doctrine. "He that is caused in a spiritual manner to approach or draw near to God, will have a desire *to dwell in the house of God*, that is, to be united to his church." He who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, and is brought near to God by the atoning blood of Christ, and the sanctifying influences of the holy Spirit, will desire to be *a visible fellow-citizen with the saints*, and to become one of *the household*. He who has frequented the courts of God, attending on the worship of the church, and has felt the special presence of God there, convincing, converting, and comforting his soul, will be glad to dwell there, and to join himself to the church, as a part or member of it, and that for these reasons following:

I. "Because he finds so much delight in approaching near to God, that he desires still to be nearer." He feels that nearness to God is happiness; and he cannot have too much of that; he cannot be too near his chief good, and his soul's delight. When he has *come up to the house of God*, and only paid a visit there, he has tasted so much sweetness in this visit, that he cannot satisfy himself to be a mere visitant, where he may be an inhabitant; he would dwell where God dwells, and be always with him. God himself, in infinite condescension, makes a visit to families, and to closets, where prayer is performed, and comforts praying souls. But God *dwells in Zion, this is his rest for ever, for he has desired it*; Psal. cxxxii. 13, 14. Therefore holy souls would dwell there also. David would have the ark brought to Zion, that he might dwell with God: And he often longed to *dwell in God's house*; Psal. xxvii. 4. Peter was near to God on the holy mount, and he was immediately for *making tabernacles*, and dwelling there; Luke ix. 33. He that has drawn near to God in worship, enjoys so much pleasure in common ordinances, that he breathes after special ones: With God's invitation he is pleased, and persuaded to come, and he would fain taste the entertainment. When Christ by his messengers speaks in general to mankind, he finds a sweetness in the voice, he longs therefore to have Christ speak particularly to him as a believer and a friend. When Christ publishes love to the world, it is pleasant to hear it; But he longs to hear him say to his own soul, my beloved. He has heard wisdom inviting the sons of men to her feast; Prov. ix. 5. *Come eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.* He has tasted of these provisions in the spiritual sense of them, and he would partake thereof in all the sensible emblems too.

He is well pleased with the covenant of grace, and he

agrees to it heartily; he would therefore *set his own seal to it*, and receive a seal from God. He that has a true relish of divine privileges, will long after their increase and enlargement; he that has felt any thing of heaven, will get as near it as possible here on earth. Now are these the breathings of our souls? Have we ever found such divine delight in approaching to God, as makes us long after greater degrees of nearness to him? We have reason to doubt, whether our hearts ever drew near to God in the common institutions of his worship, such as prayer, reading, and hearing the word, if we have no appetite to the special entertainments of his house, and the provisions of his holy table. We may justly question, whether our souls are brought near to God at all, if we have no desire to dwell with him.

II. "He that feels grace begun in his heart by approaching to God, will be ever pursuing those methods whereby it may be carried on." The very word οἰκοδομη, or edification, which is used in several places of the New Testament to signify *the growth of grace*, does properly mean building up, and seems to have a special reference to the house of God, that spiritual building to which every true christian should belong, and that in a visible manner too. He that was *convinced of sin and of righteousness*, and was led into *the glorious light of the gospel, by drawing near to God* in public worship, when he was before blind and ignorant, will surely seek a greater nearness to God, that he may ensure divine illuminations, and dwell always in the light. He that was sanctified and made a new creature, by approaching to God in the common ministrations of his temple, will lay himself under all the special advantages that the temple is furnised with, to maintain his new nature, and increase in holiness. The communion of the saints, and the fellowship of a church, is an appointed means for the increase of grace, and fruitfulness *in every good work*; Psal. xcii. 13, 14. "Those that be planted in the house of the Lord, should flourish in the courts of our God; they shall still bring forth fruit in old age, they shall be fat and flourishing." And I think I may pronounce this truth boldly, "That soul has nothing of true religion or piety begun, who is perfectly contented with any little and low degrees of it, and does not desire its increase.

The christian who has found *God in his sanctuary* according to his word, longs to be *satisfied* with more of *his* special *goodness*. You may read his encouragements in the words of the prophet; Is. lv. 3, 11. compared with chapter lvi. 4—7. When the Lord said to him in the public ministry, "Incline your ear and come unto me, hear, and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting covenant with you;" he heard the invitation *of mercy, and he* entered into the covenant of the *Lord, and he begun to taste his* grace: He came, he heard, and

his soul lives. He has found the word of God accomplishing good pleasure, and *prospered* thus far *in the thing for whic was sent:* Therefore he joins himself to the Lord, and take his place in his house, and takes hold on his covenant in a pu profession; he hopes, now he is "brought to God's holy mo tain," that "he shall be made joyful in his house of pray He that has found the accomplishment of some promises, w put his soul directly under the influence of all of them. He faith, and believes that *God is faithful* and will fulfil all his r tions; he has trusted in several of the relations which God assumed, and found them already fulfilled, as a faithful cre preserver, redeemer, &c. now he would put himself unde care as a Father of the family, and a master of the house, as king of his church; and when he enters into Zion, or joins h self to a christian church, he humbly expects to find those mises made good; Psal. cxxxii. 15, 16. "I will abunda bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. I also clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall s aloud for joy." And Psal. xcii. 13. "Those who are pla in the courts of God shall flourish and be fruitful there."

Now it is proper to put this question to our own souls: those of us who are joined in holy fellowship take pleasur our station in the church, as it is an appointed means to incr grace in us, and to promote universal holiness both of heart life? Do we *wait upon God* in the solemn ordinances of church, with a humble faith in his promises, that he will meet bless us there? And as for those of us who have not yet take our places in the house of God, do we desire that holiness sh increase in us? And why then do we not breathe after the bl ings of Sion, and an accomplishment of those promises w God has made to his church? What sign or evidence ca have that we ever begun to receive grace from God, if we l no longing desires of soul to enjoy greater degrees of it? how can we pretend to long after *growth in grace*, if we re the appointed means of it?

III. He that is caused to draw near to God in public ship, finds his soul softened by the approaches of divine g and feels the awful impression of divine commands to per social worship." He reads his duty plain by the light of na that there ought to be religious societies, and public honour to God: He reads it yet plainer in the word of scripture, tha original christians were wont to form themselves into churche sacred societies, to celebrate the institutions of their Lord, are required by the apostle *not to forsake those assemblies:* conscience feels the divine authority, and he cannot r *plain duty.*

It would be too large here to lay down half the rea

ach-fellowship, as a duty incumbent on those that have tasted the grace of God; it may be proved in a typical way at least, in the practice of the Jews, and the church under the Old Testament, in their public and solemn covenanting with God: It ay be further evidenced by the many prophecies and promises pecerning Zion, some of which have a reference to New Testament times, and the assemblies of the saints under the dispensation of the gospel: It may be inferred from the directions of e Lord Jesus Christ, concerning the discipline of a church, as ll as from the positive institution of the Lord's-supper, which ust not be celebrated but in a christian assembly: It may be gued from the many counsels and directions which saint Paul s given concerning various offices, and forms of order and government, which can have no place, but in a particular church: he great designs and ends of church-fellowship, with regard to e public honour of God, the glory of Christ, and the spiritual ofit of men, are sufficient proofs of this duty: And all these guments are established and confirmed by the practice of the postles, and the primitive converts.

Now I say, a soul that has approached unto God in divine rdinances, will obey divine commands: He that tastes sacred leasure, will learn sacred duty. He that has received divine ercy, will reverence divine authority. So the saints in 2 Cor. iii. 5. *They gave their own selves first to the Lord, and then signed themselves to the directions and commands of the apostles, according to the will of God.* Now let us see whether we el the influence of this command. Do we, who are joined in ly communion, continue our stations in a church of Christ, on the authority of a divine institution, and love to the ordinance? Or is it because we cannot without difficulty or shame *eak the bonds* of Christ, *and cast his cords from us*? And let all examine by this rule, whether we truly approach unto od in ordinances, or no. Have we been melted by divine love to a compliance with all the institutions of God? Or can we ily content ourselves to make a mere common profession, without ever subjecting ourselves to the ordinances of God's house? you believe the special solemnities of the church to be a divine pointment, and yet have no thought or desire tending that way, u will have much ado to prove that you are sincere in any part worship.

IV. "He that truly draws near to God, finds so much tisfaction in it, that he loves to lay himself under more and onger engagements to abide near to him." Those that delight seeking the Lord their God, will not only *ask the way to Zion h their faces thitherward*, but they will also agree together and , *Come, and let us join ourselves to the* Lord in a perpetual *enant that shall not be forgotten;* Jer. i. 4, 5. In a solemn

manner they will give themselves up to the Lord in the fac his church. They take pleasure to lay bonds on their sou walk closely with God; and they believe, and rejoice that great God engages himself at the same time to walk with th according to his ancient promise; Lev. xxvi. 3, 12. *If ye in my statutes, and keep my commandments and do them, I walk among you, and will be your God; and ye shall be people.*

Besides, a person that is truly brought near to Go Jesus Christ, loves to put himself under the watch and ca Christ, and that in the most express and sensible manner coming into his house. He takes up his place there, that he be guarded from those temptations, whereby the world m allure him to depart from God again. He gives himself u the care and watchfulness of the pastor, whose business it i *watch over souls*: He subjects himself to the watchful eye care of all his brethren and fellow-christians in the church, they may be as guards and assistants to him in his holy w He thinks he can never lay himself under too many obligat to the Lord; and he desires that *the vows of God* may ever a upon him, that his soul may be kept from all iniquity, and fr wandering into forbidden ways. Shall I entreat you now to quire whether this be the temper of your hearts? Have y found so much pleasure in approaching God, and are you so ful persuaded that your happiness consists in it, that you are de sirous to bind yourselves in the strongest manner to abide wit God? Or do you think you have too many bonds upon you already? And is it for that reason you abstain from the fellowship of a church, lest ye should be tied too fast to religion, and have too many eyes and guards upon you? It is a dangerous sign that you have never been truly brought near to God, if you are willing to live at a looser rate, and are afraid of too many engagements to holiness.

V. "He that draws near to God in worship, and enjoys the sweetness of the ordinances of Christ, will endeavour to maintain his public honour in the world." It is by such a public profession, Christ is honoured among men, and in his house are his ordinances celebrated. Now should christians refuse this duty, where would be a church to bear up the holy name of Christ in this sinful world? Where would be a house of God for ordinances to be administered in? It is therefore out of love to the ordinances where his soul has approached nigh to God, and out of love to Christ, to support his glory, and *confess him among men*, that such a person *will dwell in the courts, in the house of the Lord*, and give up his name to Christ in the fellowship of his church. And what can our consciences answer now to such an enquiry as this? What concern have we for the public

honour of Christ? Can we pretend to have *tasted of his grace*, and have no regard for his glory? Do we plead his name before God as our only hope, and are we unwilling to *confess his name before men*? Are there none of you in this assembly, who hope you are brought near to God by the blood of Christ, and yet delay and refuse to give this public honour to him in the world: What would become of the profession of the name and glory of Christ among men, if all were of your mind, and took no more care to maintain it than you do? Where would any church of Christ be found? Where would the special ordinances of the gospel be administered? Or any such thing as the public *communion of the saints*? If all were so negligent in this matter as you are, churches would be lost, and *the Lord's-supper* quite forgotten; though our Lord appointed it to continue *till he come*.

VI. "He that is brought near to God, and united to Christ, will love to look like one that is near God, like a member of Christ, and one of the body." He that is of the family of the faithful, delights to appear like one of Christ's household, and therefore will dwell in his house. Gospel visible churches are types of the invisible: And a true christian is not ashamed to own his relation to the church above, by his communion with the church on earth. It is true, a person may be a child of God in secret, and of the household of Christ, and yet may not at present have taken up his place in the family, nor dwell in the house of God, nor be joined to any visible church; but then such persons look like strangers, like the children of this world, for they dwell with them in the visible kingdom of Satan: Now true christians would, or should look like themselves, and not appear like *foreigners and strangers*, but as *fellow-citizens with the saints*; Eph. ii. 19.

I confess there may be some seasons and circumstances, which may not only indulge, but even oblige christians to conceal their character and profession. Piety and prudence agree well together; and we are not to expose ourselves, nor our sacred things, to a cruel and scoffing age, without an apparent call of Christ. "Pearls must not be cast before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and tear us;" Mat. vii. 6. But remember, my friends, that this can never be an excuse for a constant and an universal neglect of the profession of Christ, and communion with his churches. And doubtless the guilt of such a neglect is more heinous in a day of liberty, and when there is the least temptation and danger.

VII. He that approaches to God the Father, and holds communion with him, loves to be near the children, and to hold communion with the saints; *for he that loves God, must love his brother also*; 1 John iv. 21. And he must shew his love by delighting in their company, and dwelling with them, in the house

of their common Father. He must and will hold a visible fellowship with them, as he hopes he has a share in their invisible blessings. All their infirmities and their follies do not disgust him half so much, as the image of God in them gives him pleasure: He loves to be with them, for God is with them; and he longs to be one of them, for they are one with Christ, united to him *in one Spirit*. There is a more intimate freedom in holy conversation among the inhabitants of one house, among the members of a christian church. They grow into an inward acquaintance: There is an opening in their bosoms and their hearts to their brethren, and a sacred friendship in spiritual affairs. See what affectionate intimacy David expresses, and what kind things he speaks concerning a fellow-member of the Jewish church, though he indeed proved a false one; Psal. lv. 13, 14. *Thou, my equal, my guide, and my acquaintance; we took sweet counsel together, and walked into the house of God in company*: And fellow-christians in the same society do, or should maintain such a pious amity. Surely we have but poor evidences that our souls approach to God in his worship, if we have mean thoughts of his family, and despise his children, as though they were not worthy to be one with us, or we ashamed to be one with them. Will God, the glorious and the holy *dwell amongst them*, and are they too despicable and unworthy to have our company? Let us ask our own hearts, if we are related to God by adoption, and become his children, why do we not join ourselves to the family, and hold communion with our brethren?

Reflection I. What further remarks shall we make now, at last, upon this doctrine, and this discourse? Surely "they teach us to make a severe reflection upon ourselves and our conduct; if we find no desire to *dwell in the house of God*, no breathings of soul after *the fellowship of saints*, and the special ordinances of the church of Christ." Either we labour under some mistake, same ignorance of duty; or we are under the power of some present temptation; or else our fancied approaches to God are but deceits and delusions. Observe my words, I cannot say this is the case of all that are not *joined to the disciples*, and added to the visible church; but this must be the case of all that have no desires of it. They that have no inclination to get nearer to God than they are, have a just reason to think they were never brought near him.

II. "There are surely some sensible defects or corruptions in that church, or there is a decay of religion in its members, where church-fellowship is not still esteemed a pleasure and a privilege." Where holy communion is an insipid and tasteless thing, there must be some degrees of distance and estrangement between God and his people; either God is in some measure *withdrawn from* that church, where saints delight not in their

o assemblies and ordinances, or he is withdrawn from our , if we take not delight therein; for where God dwells ng his saints, pleasure will dwell too. It is the presence of makes heaven, where pleasures are grown up to their full ction. Let us ask our souls, whether we are not decaying dians? Did we not use to *come up to the house of God* with and worship together with delight? And that perhaps in s of difficulty too, as well as in days of greater liberty? at a blessed frame of spirit was David in? Psal. xlii. 4. surely we have felt the same sacred pleasure too, *when he up, as it were in multitudes to the house of God, with the of joy and praise.* Is it thus with us at present? Or have st the sense and savour of those days? Where is *that holy* e, that impatient longing and *thirsting after God*, which once ared among us? Our dwelling *in the house of the Lord*, has ps made the good things of his house familiar, common and mptible. O let us strive and labour, and pray for recover- grace. Decays will grow upon us, and separate us farther God, and from the delightful sense of his favour, unless we *watchful, and repent and renew our first-love.*

PREFACE

TO "AN ESSAY ON CIVIL POWER IN THINGS SACRED."

THE author of these papers has frequently fallen into company, wherein he had occasion to converse on the topics of liberty and power, both civil and religious: And having never settled and ranged his own ideas and reasonings thereupon in so exact and so harmonious an order as he wished, he some years ago set himself down to try if he could draw out his thoughts into a regular scheme, whereby he might better confirm or correct his own conduct. He then applied himself to a diligent and faithful enquiry, without consulting other authors, how far his own reason would carry him toward the establishment of any certain religion in a country or nation, with a real desire to find a just foundation for it, and try how far it could be brought into form and method.

And that he might secure himself the better from all prejudices arising from present establishments, he proposed to himself the idea of a new erected state or government of any kind whatsoever, laying aside all prepossessions and influences from the present statutes and customs of men, and from the appearances of things in any nation whatsoever, while he was engaged in these speculations

In matters of practice he has always shewn himself on every occasion a constant and sincere friend and faithful subject to our British government; and as he endeavours to pay every one in church and state their due, so he rejoices in the protestant succession to the crown, and the illustrious family which possesses it. And it is the desire of his soul, that our present rightful sovereign, King George the Second, may have every grace and blessing poured down upon his royal person, to render him a long and glorious instrument of divine mercy, to diffuse blessings over the whole protestant world, and particularly over the British nation.

As the author abhors the thought of raising seditions in the state under our happy constitution from any pretences either civil or religious, so he has no views of disturbing any character or set of men in those just privileges and possessions which they enjoy by the laws of the land, for he possesses all his own privileges by the same.

He is so well convinced of our happy situation above and beyond almost every other nation under heaven, that he does not suppose it can be either proper or lawful for any persons or parties among us to attempt to shake the present foundations of our government, in order to introduce in practice such a scheme of liberty in matters of conscience as these papers may describe in speculation. Surely we value our British constitution and the privileges we enjoy, both civil and sacred, at too high a rate, ever to bring the hazard and loss of them into a competition with any new schemes and models, which may be formed by the warm imagination or doubtful reasonings of men.

Yet it may be proper and useful to any man for his own satisfaction to enter into this subject, and to search it through and through, according to his best capacity, that he may form a better judgment of the many late contests in our nation concerning penal laws and tests in civil and religious affairs. The author was very desirous to try "how far his reason could establish a

national religion," and adjust and limit the common rights of mankind, both sacred and civil, under this establishment in any country whatsoever, wherein religion may be professed in various forms; and at the same time to maintain a perfect consistence with all due liberty of conscience, and support the just authority of supreme rulers. What he had written on this subject he was desired to publish as a matter of further enquiry to those who have thought much on this argument: and perhaps it may serve to lead those who have never much thought of it into a more natural and easy track of thinking and reasoning about it.

If any thing in this essay shall prove so happy as to shed one peaceful and serene beam of light upon this dark and noisy controversy, he hopes to find forgiveness and acceptance among his best readers: And he would take pleasure in seeing such light further improved by minds better furnished, till it spread itself into a fair and glorious day. Such a clear and harmonious view of these subjects would do much toward the security and ease of civil government in any particular occurrences, as well as toward the general advantage of true religion and the support of just liberty, which are three of the most valuable privileges of mankind, and the choicest blessings on this side heaven.

March 20th, 1738-9.

A

NEW ESSAY

ON

CIVIL POWER IN THINGS SACRED:

OR,

An Enquiry after an Established Religion, consistent with the Just Liberties of Mankind, and practicable under every Form of Civil Government.

SECTION I.—*Of the Nature and Ends of Civil Government, with the several kinds of it, and its extent to Religion.*

I. THE design of civil government is to secure the persons, the properties, the just liberty and peace of mankind from the invasions and the injuries of their neighbours: Whereas if there were no such thing as government amongst men, the stronger would often make inroads upon the peace and possessions, the liberties and the lives of those that were weaker; and universal confusion and disorder, mischiefs, murders, and ten thousand miseries would overspread the face of the earth.

II. In order to this general good, viz. the preservation of the persons of men with their peace and possessions, mankind have been led by the principles of reason and self-preservation to join themselves in distinct civil societies; wherein as by a compact, expressed or implied, every single person is concerned in the welfare and safety of all the rest, and all engage their assistance to defend any of the rest when their peace or possessions are invaded: so that by this means every single member of the society has the wisdom and strength of the whole engaged for his security and defence.

III. To attain this end most happily, different societies have chosen different forms of government, as they thought most conducive to obtain it.

1. Some have deemed it proper to be governed by a single person, and have ventured to put the authority and power of making and executing laws for guarding their persons and properties, and for avenging their injuries, into the hands of a single person; and have obliged themselves to assist and support him in the due exercise of this authority. This is called kingly government or monarchy: And where this kingly

power has no limitations, it is called absolute monarchy or sovereignty.

2. Others have committed this same power to the hands of few great men or nobles, persons of riches, or high birth, power, or who are supposed to have superior wisdom and prudence, who shall act in concert with one another to promote good. This is called aristocracy; especially when it is agreed that these men shall have their heirs for their successors, or shall have a right to chuse their own successors themselves: for then the people have divested themselves of all share in the government.

3. A third sort have chosen a popular government, that is, when the people themselves meet and make laws, and determine things of importance by a common vote or the sentence of the major part. But where the society is so numerous, that the people cannot all meet together for this end, they have parcelled themselves into many districts, and chosen particular persons to represent them in each district. Thus the people are said to govern themselves by these their representatives, which are chosen anew by the people as often as they think fit, or at stated or any stated seasons which the people agree upon. This called democracy; and such a state is a proper republic or commonwealth in the strictest sense.

4. There are other societies again, which have made a compound government out of several of these; so the ancient Roman government had the "patres," or "patricii," or senators of their nobility, and yet the plebeians or common people had some share in the government too by their power in chusing tribunes, &c. After the year of the city three hundred and sixty seven, the two consuls were generally one patrician and one plebeian. Sometimes there is made a mixture of all the forms of government: Such was the Roman under their emperors, if not under some of their Kings; at least, there was the appearance of it. But the most regular mixture seems to be that wherein the chosen representatives of the people have their distinct share of government, the nobles or great men have their share, and a single person or the king has his part and share in this authority, and all agreed upon by the whole community, or by persons chosen to represent them. This is called a mixed monarchy; and herein these three estates of the kingdom are supposed by mutual assistances and mutual limitations, not only to secure the common peace, the liberty and welfare of the nation from enemies, but to guard it also from any dangerous invasions that might be made upon it by any one of these three powers themselves. Such is the happiness of Great Britain under the King, lords, and commons.

IV. Here let it be noted, that whosoever has the power of

making laws, whether the king, the nobles, or the people, or all these together, yet still the particular execution of these laws must be committed to many particular magistrates or officers, and they are usually fixed in a subordination to one another, each of them fulfilling their several posts throughout the nation, in order to secure the general peace.

V. In all these forms of government there is, as I hinted before, a compact of agreement between the governors and governed, expressed or implied, viz. that the governors shall make it their care and business to protect the people in their lives, liberties and properties, by restraining or punishing those who injure, attack or assault them; and that the governed submit to be punished if any of them are found guilty of these practices: And also that they oblige themselves to pay such homage, honours, and taxes, and yield such assistance to the governors with their natural powers, and their money or possessions, as may best obtain the great ends of government, and the common safety of the whole society.

VI. For this purpose therefore, each person by this compact willingly abridges himself of some part of his original liberty or property, for the common service of the society of which he is a member: And he engages himself with his powers and capacities to defend and preserve the peace, and order, and government of the society, so long as he and his fellow-subjects are protected by it, in the enjoyment of all their natural rights and liberties. The very reason of man and the nature of things shew us the necessity of such agreements.

VII. From this view of things it appears, that though no particular form of government, besides the ancient Jewish, could claim *divine right*, yet all government, in general, is originally from God, as he is the author of nature and reason, and *the God of order* and justice: And every particular government which is agreed upon by men, so far as it retains the original design of government, and faithfully preserves the peace and liberties of mankind, ought to be submitted to, and is supported by the authority of God; for it is God our creator, who by the light of reason hath led mankind into civil government, in order to their mutual help, and preservation, and peace. In this sense it is that the two great apostles Peter and Paul vindicate civil governors, and demand subjection to them from christians; Rom. xiii. 1—4. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers; for there is no power but of God: The powers that be, are ordained of God. Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God, and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation, that is, are condemned; for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil.* 1 Peter ii. 13. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake; whether*

it be to the king as supreme, or to governors as to them who are sent by him, for the punishment of evil-doers, and the praise of them that do well. What St. Paul saith *is ordained of God*, that is, in general, as civil government or civil powers, St. Peter calls *the ordinance of man*, that is, in particular, as to the several forms of this government which men agree upon, or appoint: And indeed God has left it to men to agree upon, and appoint the particular forms: And so far as any of them pursue and attain this end, they must be submitted to, and supported, as an appointment or ordinance both of God and man.

VIII. Though civil government is an ordinance of God, and appointed by him according to the light of reason, and is thus far supported by divine revelation, yet in its proper aims and designs it hath no direct reach nor authority beyond the benefit of men in this world: Nor do the things of religion, nor the affairs of a future state come within its cognizance, any further than they have a most evident reference to the natural and civil welfare of men in the present life: It was only for the security of their natural and civil interests and rights, that men at first joined themselves in civil societies, and not that their governors should chuse their religion for them. Government itself is a necessary thing in this world, and a natural or moral institution of God among persons of all sorts of religion, whether heathens, turks, or christians, to preserve them in present peace: Nor do any of these religions alter the nature of civil government*.

IX. Whereas if civil government did properly extend its authority to religion and the things of a future happiness, no government or governors could be said to be *appointed of God* who are of a false religion; and those only who know and teach, and promote the true religion, and lead people in a right way to this future happiness, could be of God's appointment; even as no government extending to civil things can be said to be of God any further than it tends to promote the civil peace and welfare. But if such an unreasonable and absurd opinion as this were allowed, viz. that the appointment of true religion belongs to the civil government, and there is but one true religion, it would cut off civil government from being an appointment of God among all the nations of the earth, and in all ages of the world who had lost the true religion; and all those nations and ages would be left to everlasting anarchy and confusion, till God brought the true religion among them.

* What exception must be made for the Jewish government, which was revealed to Moses, and was almost entirely divine, shall be taken notice of in its due place.

X. And on the other hand, if the authority of every civil government extended to direct the affairs of religion, and that by God's appointment; then every government would have a right to determine what shall be the religion of that society or nation; and by this means, as the true religion is professed by very few civil governments in comparison of the multitudes of false religions, there would be an obligation from God on the greatest part of mankind to submit to their governors when they enjoin a false religion, and receive, and practise it instead of the true, which is too absurd a thing to be supposed.

SECT. II.—*The Necessity of acknowledging a God, and the Religion of an Oath.*

I. Though religion, so far as it relates to the salvation of our souls and a future world of happiness, doth not come within the cognizance of civil government; yet as the affairs of men are situated in this world under all governments, there are several things relating to our civil welfare which seem to require the knowledge and profession of a God; as these four for instance: 1. Witnessing in controversies between two parties. 2. Information in criminal cases. 3. Security against secret plots and mischiefs from the people. 4. Guarding against oppression and injustice of the rulers. Let us consider each of these distinctly:

1. The case of "witnessing in controversies between two contending parties requires the acknowledgment of a God." Partly through the ignorance of men, and partly through their evil inclinations, there will be controversies frequently arising among the people, which must be determined by the magistrate as a judge of right and wrong. Now in order to search into the truth of things, and the right of particular persons, it is not thought proper for the magistrate usually to give credit to any persons in their own cause, when there is no concurrent witness or witnesses who declare the same thing. And whereas witnesses in many disputes about property may justly be suspected to warp from the truth through private influences, if there be no other person who can detect and discover them, therefore it is necessary they should have some knowledge, and make some profession of an invisible power who made and governs the world, who sees and hears and knows every thing which is done among men, and who is a guardian of justice and truth, and some time or other will terribly punish falsehood and lying.

2. "The case of information against criminals requires some profession of a God." Let it be considered, that whatsoever injuries or frauds, crimes or mischiefs, are practised or committed in any nation under these governments, they cannot

be punished till those magistrates who are executors of the laws, are informed of them; nor can such informers at all times be safely credited, because they may have no regard to truth in themselves, or they may be swayed by some evil bias, unless they have some knowledge or belief and reverence of a higher power who knows all truth, and will avenge falsehood.

3. "To secure a state against secret plots and mischievous designs of the people requires the profession of a divine Being." There are many frauds and plots, and secret evil practices which tend to the injury of mankind, to the ruin of all government and peace in a nation, and yet they cannot perhaps be found out by the eyes of men soon enough to prevent the mischief intended. Therefore the belief and awful sense of some all-knowing and over-ruling power is needful to guard the evil minds of men against contriving these secret mischievous practices, and the profession of this belief is a necessary band of common union and safety.

4. "The acknowledgment of a God is necessary to guard officers and rulers from oppressing the people." Magistrates or officers themselves may be easily inclined or tempted to neglect their duty to the people, they may be bribed or frightened to pass wicked and unjust judgments on men, or to commit grievous outrages and acts of violence upon them, if they have no knowledge nor belief of any superior power who rules the world, and will punish unfaithfulness, injustice, violence, oppression and falsehood in all ranks of his creatures, whether high, or low, rich or poor.

II. In order therefore to a peaceful and successful government, and to the preservation of every man in his rights and liberties, it is necessary that both the governors and the subjects should acknowledge some God, that is, some superior invisible power who governs the world, who knows all secret things, and will punish those crimes or those acts of injustice or falsehood, either in the governor or the governed, which violate the common welfare of mankind, and which are committed in secret. Whatever some witty persons have pretended, that a kingdom or state of atheists may be supported without any regard to a God or religion, it has huge and dreadful inconveniences attending it, considering the wicked and perverse tempers and manners of men.

III. Now to secure a civil government in the execution of its proper designs, to secure the mutual fidelity of subjects and their governors, and to secure the truth of witnesses in matters of controversy, and in informations brought against any criminals, the bond of an oath is the ultimate resort of men: For an oath is a solemn appeal to a God, concerning the truth of what they declare; it is an appeal to some superior and invisible

power, who will avenge falsehood and perjury wheresoever it is practised, though it should not or could not be found out by the search of men.

And let it be observed that an oath or an appeal to God concerning truth always implies in it, that we hope for a blessing from this God upon our fidelity, if we speak the truth; but that we imprecate the vengeance of this God to fall upon us, if we knowingly speak what is false, or act contrary to our covenants or engagements.

IV. I would fain have it observed also yet further that it will be a much more effectual means to secure mankind from perjury, and from every degree of falsehood or violation of an oath, if the oath were always administered by the magistrate with the utmost solemnity, and if the words in which an oath is formed did express the imprecation or curse upon falsehood strongly and terribly, rather than if it expressed only the blessing upon truth and faithfulness. And I have often thought that one reason why there is so much perjury in our nation, and the religion of an oath has so little force upon the consciences of men, is because in our common form, "So help me God," the blessing only is expressed, and the curse is concealed and only implied at a distance; so that very few who take the oath have such an awful sense of their transactions with an almighty avenging power at such a season as they ought to have, for want of the plainer appearance of the imprecation, as well as for want of greater solemnity in the manner of administering and taking the oath. I well remember in former years a gentleman, who was a justice of peace in the country, informed me that ignorant people would easily be persuaded by their neighbours to go to take their oath before him concerning particular facts, when they would not be persuaded to assert the same thing boldly with some terrible imprecation themselves, of broken or withered limbs, if they did not utter the truth.

V. Upon the whole it is necessary, that the governors and governed should acknowledge and profess their belief and veneration of a God, that is, of some superior and invisible power who will punish perjury and violence and secret crimes against the welfare of mankind. And it seems a most proper and agreeable, if not a necessary thing, that each should be bound to the other, that is, the governors to the people, and the people to the governors by the solemnity of an oath, to fulfil their mutual duties and engagements of protection and obedience. In Great Britain the kings are engaged hereto by their coronation-oath, and the people by the oath of allegiance. The coronation-oath obliges the king to grant and keep and confirm to his people the laws and customs, &c. and also, to his power, to cause law, jus-

tice and discretion in mercy and truth to be executed in all his judgments. The oath of allegiance obliges the people to support the king in all his just rights and powers, so far as he can, doth, and will protect his subjects in their just rights and properties. It is evidently a mutual contract, and both are bound to each other by this solemnity of an oath.

VI. It seems to me also very proper, that the outward ceremony or action which is used in swearing, whether it be lifting up the hand, or kissing the book, &c. be publicly and authoritatively declared, not to be designed as a religious ceremony, whereby we pay our invented honours to God in the act of swearing, but that it is used only as a civil gesture or sign, whereby we testify to the world that we do call God to witness to the truth of that we speak. Hereby we shall secure many scrupulous persons from the fear of taking an oath with that sign, lest they should thereby worship the great God by ceremonies invented by men, which many good subjects have thought unlawful. Or if they do still really and in conscience scruple any particular gesture or outward sign, or ceremony, their oath expressed in full and strong language should be taken without it.

VII. If any particular persons of known sobriety should declare solemnly, that from a principle of conscience they scruple the form of an oath or a solemn appeal to God concerning the truth, I think they are bound to give some proper satisfaction to the government, that the form of words which they use in witnessing, in affirmations or promises, &c. shall be deemed in all respects equal to the obligation of an oath, viz. that their consciences are equally bound by it before God, and that they shall incur the same penalties among men by the violation thereof. This will relieve the people that are called Quakers, who will not take any oath: And indeed without some such security no person is fit to enjoy the privileges of civil government, nor to be a member of any state, who refuses to bind his truth by an oath.

VIII. And therefore if there be any person who thinks and believes that the obligation arising from an oath, or from such a solemn affirmation made before the civil powers, may be dissolved and nullified by any other power upon earth, such a person may be lawfully excluded from becoming a member of the state, or enjoying any of the privileges thereof; unless he can find some way or other that shall be justly satisfactory to the state, concerning his truth or fidelity to his neighbours and his governors. For where one party cannot or will not effectually oblige themselves to allegiance and fidelity, the other party is not bound to afford them civil protection and the privileges of the government. *How far the* papists are concerned in

this matter, let others judge: But I shall have occasion to mention this hereafter.

IX. I will not stay here to debate whether it be necessary for this purpose of swearing for the uses of civil government, that men should acknowledge one single Almighty Power, that is, *the true God* in opposition to all false gods: For it is certain that some governments, who worshipped idols or false gods, did believe that these invisible powers would punish injustice and fraud among men, and thereby did maintain and secure themselves, and made their nation tolerably peaceful and flourishing for years or ages. But this may be asserted with abundant evidence and truth, that the common acknowledgment of *the one living and true God*, both by princes and people, by the governors and governed, is by far the best and surest band of government and the common peace: But I shall have occasion to mention this also afterward.

SECT. III.—*Of Public Teachers of the Laws and Morality.*

I. As there are many social duties of the law of nature which regard the security of lives and properties of men, for which all government is designed; such as honesty, justice, truth, gratitude, goodness to men, honour and fidelity to superiors, &c. so there are many crimes which are destructive to their properties or their lives, or to their whole government and peace; such as treason in all degrees, cheating, stealing, robbing, plundering, adultery, assaults, maiming, murder, and various other sorts of injuries to the bodies of men, to their known rights, powers, and privileges, as well as to their estates, their reputation, good name, and comfort: All which ought to be in the power of civil governments to forbid and restrain by proper laws; which laws should sometimes have proper rewards appointed for the innocent informers and assistants of the magistrates, but always penalties to be inflicted on the criminal.

II. There are also some personal duties of the law of nature, such as sobriety and temperance, frugality and industry; and there are sins against this law which relate primarily and chiefly to single persons, such as intemperance of every kind, gluttony, drunkenness, profuse and riotous living, universal idleness or neglect of labour among the poor, fornication, self-murder, &c. which though they do not perhaps so sensibly, directly, and immediately injure our neighbours, yet they are very pernicious to any state or government, inasmuch as they dispose men greatly to the commission of injuries against their neighbours, the violation of the rights of mankind, and the peace of society and government. These crimes seem therefore properly to lie under the cognizance and the restraints of the civil government.

III. Now as there are laws which are or should be made in every society for the preservation of the peace, and for supporting and carrying on the common welfare of the society; and as some of these laws should forbid those social crimes, such as cheating, stealing, murder, adultery, &c. and these personal crimes, idleness, drunkenness, &c. so it is necessary in a well-constituted government, that there should be some common appointed way of communicating the knowledge of these laws to the people, that they may be well apprized what is their duty and what they are forbid to practise. Surely the laws of a land should be made known to those who are to walk and live according to them, and who are to be punished for not keeping them. And by the way I wish I could give some sufficient reason why, when new laws are made in Great Britain by the three estates of the kingdom, there should not be as much care taken in a legal promulging them or the substance of them, so far as concerns all private persons at least, through every city and town in the nation, as there is of publishing the mere will of the prince by royal proclamations, which must be read in every market town. Multitudes of people are as ignorant of the laws, as they would be of proclamations, if not published in this manner.

IV. And for the same reason, since the awful veneration of a superior invisible power that knows all things, and can punish falsehood and secret crimes, is necessary to government, there should be some care taken by the governors that the knowledge of this superior invisible power should be some way proclaimed or propagated amongst all the subjects.

V. And though it is possible, as was hinted before, that the belief and acknowledgment of several gods, who are avengers of falsehood and secret mischief, may be consistent with the tolerable welfare and conveniences of the state, yet it must be granted that polytheism, or the belief of many gods, hath so much absurdity in it, and is so contrary to the light of nature, that many inconveniences may arise from it; and therefore it is highly proper that the existence and perfections, the providence and natural and moral government of the one true God should be some way made known through the nation, together with the natural veneration or reverence that is due to him from all men.

VI. Whether the belief and profession of the one true God should be imposed on all the nation under any penalty, I leave others to determine. I rather think it should not; and for these three reasons:

I. There may be many heathens who worship several gods, who *yet may be useful members of* the state; they may heartily *agree to an original compact of* government, and may seal it

sincerely with an oath; they may dread the vengeance of th gods falling upon them for falsehoods, and may perhaps a great wealth and strength to a government or nation; why th should they be utterly secluded from it? If it be objected th no such persons as idolaters were permitted to live in the Jew state by the laws of God, Mr. Locke in his admirable lett of toleration has answered that difficulty, by shewing that t Jewish government was a theocracy wherein God, even *Je vah, the one true God*, was their political king, and theref the acknowledgment of any other God was treason against t state; but it was never so in any other nation upon earth*.

II. If the members of any state or government happen be heathens or idolaters, or perhaps manichees, who believe t sovereign principle or powers, one of good, the other of e &c. they may be invited and inclined to hearken to the prin ples of true religion and christianity, if they are not utterly d couraged by finding penalties laid upon their mistaken beli and they might by the same gentleness continue their favoura opinion of us, and grow up by degrees into believers of *one true God*. I might repeat the same thing concerning heathen neighbours of such a state or government, and strang who come to traffic with them. By seeing the gentleness a goodness of such a christian nation, they by degrees may atte to the gospel of Christ, and be converted and become his d ciples, and may be allured to unite themselves and their ric and powers to support this government. Penalties may m dissemblers and hypocrites, but good christians are not to made this way.

III. If it be allowed that polytheists should lie under a penalty by the law for owing many gods, let us suppose a Sc nian or an Arian, a Turk or a Deist to be the supreme governo May he not take into his head to lay the same penalty on Atl nasians for owning and adoring three distinct, infinite and mighty persons, of which the Unitarian governor perhaps get no other idea than that of three gods? We well know th the governments of this world are not wont of themselves to too nice or too just in their distinction of theological matte nor too ready to put a favourable construction on the sentime

* I would not willingly divert from my subject here so far as to shew, t God was the proper political Lord and supreme King of the Jews, even a they had kings, as well as before. It was God himself who from time to ti pointed out by inspiration, or by extraordinary providences, the judges t should rule them: It was God who pointed out their kings as his deputies in immediate manner, as Saul, David, Solomon who was one of David's youn sons, &c. It was God who divided the kingdom into two kingdoms, who by prophets *gave Jeroboam ten tribes*, who cut off his posterity, and anointed Je and again cut off his posterity, and did what he pleased in altering the succ sions of their kings; Jehovah the *Holy One of Israel*, who was their God, *also their King*.

of those, who dare to differ from them. I fear the remonstrances made by the Athanasians drawn from a few theological or metaphysical distinctions, or from the holy bible itself, would not easily persuade the Arian or Socinian ruler, the Turkish or Deist governor to make any saving difference between them and other polytheists: And thus the idolater with many gods, and the Athanasian with his trinity would fall under the same public penalties, how unjust soever such a sentence might be, if thoroughly examined by christian principles.

VII. As those persons who are appointed by the government to teach the people the civil rules or statutes of the land, should be well instructed in them themselves, that as far as possible the people might never be led into a mistake in matters wherein their lives and properties are concerned; so for the same reason, the persons that should be appointed by the state to instruct the people in the knowledge of a God and the religion of an oath, and to acquaint them with the rules of these personal and social virtues which are so necessary to good government, I say, these teachers should be themselves well instructed in the knowledge of God, of vice and virtue, and be also to all appearance pious and virtuous and loyal, practising that reverence to God, and those civil and moral laws which they teach, that with more success they may instruct the people in these things which are of so much importance to their civil welfare and the preservation of the government.

VIII. As taxes are raised by the state, and customs and tributes of various kinds justly imposed by the government, in order to defray the public expences and to pay the public officers; so it seems reasonable that those public officers who are appointed to instruct the people in the knowledge of the laws of the land, and in the knowledge of these virtues and vices which affect the civil society, as well as in the knowledge of a God who will punish secret wickedness, and in the sacredness and solemnity of an oath, which is the bond of government, I say, it is reasonable that these public teachers should be paid or supported out of the civil list, if I may so express it, or the tribute raised for the support of civil government, since the support and peace of the civil government so much depends upon it*.

* Long since this was written, I met with a particular appointment of such public sermons or instructions, to be given to the people in China, by their Mandarins or governors of towns and providence, on the first and fifteenth days of the month, which is actually practised by them there, as Pere Du Halde gives us an account in his late History of China, vol. I. page 53, where he enumerates all the sixteen texts given them by the Emperor to enlarge upon one or another of them, twice a month in public assemblies. Almost every one of them contains some moral virtue, and there is a specimen added of the sermon of a Mandarin upon one of them. It may be observed indeed as a defect in the choice of these subjects, that not one of them has any relation to their gods or religion, except that which orders the stifling of *new sects*, and I think is the only one that cannot be *vindicated*.

And perhaps we might venture so far as to say, that the preachers of natural religion in all the more necessary and obvious doctrines and duties of it, which have so evident a connection with the civil prosperity and welfare of the state, may be lawfully maintained by the government out of the national tribute appointed to supply the civil list; but I affirm it not at present. I would speak with all just diffidence in things dubious.

Sect. IV.—*Of the People's Attendance on these Public Teachers.*

I. Now a question arises here, if there are public officers appointed to teach the laws of the land, and also to teach the things that relate to the knowledge of the true God, the religion of an oath, and those virtues and vices which concern the civil interests of the society, may not the supreme power likewise oblige the people at certain seasons to come and attend the lectures of these public teachers, supposing that these times and seasons are so wisely adjusted as not to interfere with the civil interests of mankind or of that nation. To this I answer,

II. I see nothing in it inconsistent with the rights or just liberties of mankind: And upon this account I would ask, may not a christian prince appoint a certain hour of the first day of the week which christians esteem sacred, to be employed in hearing these lectures? And for the same reason might not a Jewish prince appoint some part of the last day of the week, which the Jews count sacred, for persons to hear such lectures? And a Turkish prince appoint his lectures of the same kind upon a Friday for the same reason?

III. And I might add further, that if the state judge it necessary, that one day in seven, or nine, or twelve, or twice in a month people should be restrained from their usual labours in public, partly to give rest to the labouring part of a nation, both man and beast, and partly that they may be more at leisure for these public lectures in their regular course, I do not at present see any thing in it inconsistent with the just liberties of the people: Provided always that the time or times appointed for such public lectures, are not so numerous nor so large as to hinder the common welfare of the people in their several particular employments, or to obstruct or prevent or too much curtail and diminish religious services, or the necessary duties where conscience obliges each of them to pay special honours to the God they profess; of which hereafter;

IV. It is granted indeed, that the Jews so long as they were a nation under a distinct government of their own, were actually under a theocracy; God was their political head and

their king; and therefore the civil and the religious concerns of that nation were more intermingled one with another in the same pages of the bible; and the religious observation of certain days and times was appointed by God, as the particular governor of that land as well as the universal Lord of conscience; which land was not very large in its whole extent. But these peculiarities of government cannot be applied to any other nation or people whatsoever; nor even to the Jews at present, who are now no united nation, but are abandoned by God their king to be a scattered people throughout the earth. Though nothing can be inferred from the special laws of the Jews about days appointed for public worship under severe penalties, which would justify other magistrates in enacting such laws, yet the nature of the thing, if such lectures of civil and moral laws must be read, will certainly require certain times to be appointed for reading them and attendance upon them. And therefore it will be absolutely necessary that such days, or hours at least, be legally settled by public authority, since the welfare of the state requires it.

V. It will be said perhaps, that however these attendances are required by a law, it is not to be supposed they will be punctually performed nor this law obeyed, unless there be some penalty annexed to the neglect. I acknowledge it, and therefore the penalty should in such cases be so wisely framed and limited, that it may not exceed the damage the public may be supposed to sustain by such a neglect. As for the neglect of attending these public lectures, I fear it will hardly be esteemed a sufficient penalty, that persons by this neglect will continue ignorant of the laws moral and civil, and thereby be more exposed to incur the several penalties to which the breaking of those laws will subject them. If any other penalties be needful, let others propose them. I would be very cautious in appointed penalties, though a law has but small force without them.

VI. But it will be objected here, in opposition to any such penalties, since God only is the Lord of conscience, no government has any right or authority to impose any thing on the consciences of its subjects, which they solemnly declare or swear they believe to be unlawful or offensive to God, as shall be more particularly shewn afterward: Suppose then any persons should pretend their conscience does not permit them to attend upon these established moral lectures of the veneration due to a God, and the various civil duties to men on those days or at those seasons that are appointed by the state for these lectures: As for instance, suppose a christian in a Turkish country be appointed to attend on these public lectures on the Lord's day or Sunday which he accounts sacred; or suppose a Jew should be

required to give his attention to them on a Saturday, which is his sabbath; would not this be a violation of the rights of conscience, if this attendance on these established lectures were imposed with a penalty?

I must answer still, that conscience in things relating to God must not be imposed upon, nor can men be obliged to alienate sacred time to mere civil purposes, but where the real necessities of the state require it; and there I suppose God will not account it criminal to comply with the necessities of the state on his own sacred day; as for instance, to stop a flood, to quench a fire, or to repel an invasion. And as the consciences of the subjects should not without necessity be imposed upon to hear these national statutes or civil lectures, where they think the sacred time is profaned hereby; so it is still more evident that no person should be constrained against his conscience to be a reader of these civil lectures, who thinks either the reading itself or the time of reading to be unlawful or offensive to God. And I think it can never be supposed that the necessities of the state can be such, as to require those very persons to read these things who think it unlawful to do it. Surely others should do that office.

Yet if I may speak my most free and reasonable thoughts here, I can hardly believe the great God would account it a violation of some part of his appointed sabbath, whether Saturday or Sunday, to hear such lessons of morality and virtue, or lessons of the knowledge of God and duty to him and to civil governors, which should be the chief substance of these lectures: For we find even under the strictnesses of the Jewish sabbatizing, our blessed Saviour himself *went to a feast at the house of a pharisee;* Luke xiv. 1. and he taught them there good manners and civility as well as morality, viz, *that they should not sit down in the chief place lest they should be removed with shame to some lower room.* And it is certain that all the books of *Moses were read in their synagogues on the sabbath-day,* wherein now and then the laws of their civil government and rules of their civil life filled up whole chapters, and employed a considerable part of the time of their attendance. But we must remember indeed that God was their king, and therefore sacred and civil affairs were intermingled. And if such days as some persons repute sacred should be appointed by the state for these lectures, perhaps it is proper that the christians or the Jews in such a nation should be content to take other hours of the same Saturday or Sunday to worship their God upon his own appointed day, with what they suppose to be his own instituted forms or peculiar modes of worship: Always supposing, as before hinted, that the reading of the laws of the land, or rather short abstracts of *them,* take up but a small part of that time which is supposed to *be sacred.*

VIII. However if any princes or any governors would shew themselves to be fathers of their people, should they not with all tenderness and care appoint such times and seasons for these public and established lectures, as might not give offence to the consciences of any of their subjects as far as possible? Nor should the penalties or very small fines for the absence of any of their subjects at such appointed seasons exceed what a tender father would see necessary for the welfare of the state to inflict on his son, who would willingly serve and obey him in those things, which yet a mistaken conscience and his sense of duty to God hardly permit him to perform. And in all these things let it be still observed and inviolably maintained, that no law should ever be enacted, nor any penalty of any kind established, but what appears necessary for the good of the state or the public civil welfare; beyond which the authority of men in civil government cannot reach*.

SECT. V.—*The Qualifications of complete Subjects of the State, and of the Magistrates thereof.*

I. Thus far then we have proceeded, and it appears that the knowledge of a God, and of the duty of obedience to governors in civil things according to the laws of the land, together with moral duties that are necessary to the welfare of the community and the support of government, ought to be taught to all the people, and I think the people ought to attend and learn something of them.

II. It must be always granted and allowed in all governments, that during the state of infancy or minority every person born in the nation, and especially every child of a member of the community, is to be esteemed so far a member of it, as to receive protection from the government, upon the allegiance of its parents; and to enjoy all those privileges which a minor is capable of.

III. But what if we should suppose this membership arising from his parents, together with the privileges thereof should cease when he arrives at age? I enquire then, whether it may not be a very proper thing that every person or at least every man, at the age of twenty-one years, should in some court of justice or before some magistrate, be required by law to declare or profess this his veneration of a God, and his obedient regard to these moral and civil laws, which it is supposed he has learned in the great and general articles of them, so far as they are consistent with his duty to God; and this in order to become a personal partaker of the privileges of the government for the rest

* Note, this section as well as this whole Treatise was written a long time before the act about reading the law made against the murderers of Captain Porteous in Scotland was framed or thought of.

of his life, and to be made a complete member of the state. Is it reasonable that any man should enjoy all the privileges of any society who will not oblige himself to the general and necessary rules of the society? And would not such a law be more likely to persuade and constrain parents to take some care that their children should be acquainted with these things which are so necessary to the welfare of mankind and of the state? And that they should have some tolerable knowledge of them before they arrive at the age of man, when the law calls upon them to become complete and personal subjects of the state?

IV. Does it not seem very necessary also, that all who are constituted magistrates or officers in the state, should not only profess these things at the time of their being invested in their office, but that they should also be persons, who to all appearance practise according to their profession? For how shall we suppose those persons will be fit guardians or executors of the civil or moral laws, who themselves manifest by their practice that they have no regard to them? Is it not evident that a man who abuses the name of God by profane swearing and cursing, who is given to drunkenness or lewdness, cheating and lying, acts of violence and oppression, or any scandalous crime which interferes with the good of mankind and the welfare of a government; I say, is it not evident that such a man should never be made a magistrate or officer for the execution of the laws of the land? Is not this of vastly greater importance than to enquire into the speculative opinions of men and their peculiar formalities of worship, in order to judge whether they should be made officers in the state?

V. Would there also be any unreasonable hardship or any inconvenience in it, if such a civil officer who is found guilty of the public violation of the civil or moral laws of the state, should be exposed to a double penalty upon the transgression of any of these moral or civil laws? Or sometimes perhaps, if the penalty be a fine, may it not be made tenfold or more according to the quality or character of such an offender? Would not this be a more powerful means of keeping both magistrates and people within the rules of virtue and public safety.

Sect. VI.—*Of Public Worship on the Principles of Natural Religion.*

I. Though we have already spoken concerning the veneration of a God as necessary in civil government, yet we have not hitherto considered any special act of religion to be performed toward him besides the religion of an oath. It comes now to be enquired, whether the acknowledgment of a God in a sufficient *manner to* answer the purposes of civil government, does not

also imply and demand, some public veneration or worship to be paid to him at certain seasons, that the world may see, as far as outward actions can manifest it, that we believe and reverence a Divine Power? This was supposed to be so necessary to the establishment of a state upon proper foundations, that Mr. Locke, that great patron of liberty, in the laws which he drew up for Carolina, appointed, that no man should have any estate or habitation in it, that does not acknowledge a God, and that this God is publicly and solemnly to be worshipped. Article 95.

II. Now the most natural, obvious and necessary parts of worship, are praise and adoration of this God, on account of his powers and perfections, the invocation of him by prayer for the blessings we stand in need of, and thanksgiving for the blessings we have received, acknowledging all that we have, even our being and our comforts, to be derived originally from him.

III. May not then every civil government appoint certain persons to offer up public prayers and praises unto the great God at certain stated seasons, and require the attendance of the people on this worship, since this is an act of natural religion, and some public worship seems necessary for every subject of the state to approve himself a believer in a God? I answer, It is difficult to find how this may be done in any nation without intrenching upon the liberty of mankind, and imposing upon the consciences of some of the inhabitants of the land; and that for these reasons:

IV. Reason I. First, It has been already granted that all the people or inhabitants of the land may not have learned to acknowledge *the one true God*, and if they happen to be heathens or polytheists, they may think it hard, to be constrained by a magistrate to worship, as the Athenians did, an *unknown God*; Acts xvii. 23. at least till they have been all so far taught and instructed as to know, believe, and profess *the true God* alone.

V. Reason II. Again, If *the one true God*, be thus publicly worshipped merely according to the dictates of the light of nature, there may be several sects in the nation who may think it necessary to worship him with the addition or mixture of their peculiar rites and ceremonies, which they suppose divine, whenever they come before him; and therefore they should never be compelled to attend this mere natural worship. Christians would say, they are particularly required *to worship the true God, in the name and by the mediation of Jesus Christ*, according as our Lord has taught them. John xiv. 6. *No man cometh to the Father but by me.* John xvi. 24. *Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name, ask and ye shall receive.* And St. Paul tells us, *that whatever we do*, and especially in divine worship, of which he is there speaking; *it should be all in the name* of Christ;

Col. iii. 17. *Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.* Now a christian may think it unlawful to come and worship even *the one true God* together with the deists, and to join with them in those prayers and praises which are not offered in the name of Christ or by his mediation, and therefore he should never be constrained to attend this natural worship by any penalty.

VI. Reason III. I know not how far it may be supposed to alleviate this difficulty and make the conscience of every christian more easy, to tell him, that there are many parts of worship paid to God in christian churches without the actual use of the name of Christ. Do we not sing David's Psalms? Do we not repeat the Lord's-prayer? And if it be lawful to address God by several of these psalms or this prayer, wherein there is not the least mention of the name or mediation of Christ, may we not join with the natural religion and worship of deists in their prayers and praises, supposing that all their expressions be conformable to what reason and the light of nature dictate; which the christian religion always pre-supposes and confirms?

VII. Reason IV. If it shall be said here, that when God is worshipped by Jewish psalms or by the Lord's-prayer, christians do or should in their own mental meditations join the name of Christ and his mediation to these addresses to God; may it not be said also, that the same mental meditations may join the name and mediation of Christ to all these public and national invocations and adorations of God performed according to the light of nature?

VIII. Reason V. If this might be allowed, there would be then indeed a sort of natural religion, which is the foundation of all true revealed religion, which might be taught universally to all the people, which might be practised and established through the nation, and perhaps be supported by the state: But still I fear the universal attendance on worship could not be commanded under any penalty, because all christian people will not, or cannot satisfy their consciences with the salvo proposed; and perhaps other sects may dislike it too upon the same foundation.

IX. Reason VI. And besides, many persons may find their consciences dissatisfied with the men whom the state shall chuse to offer up their social worship to God; they may be dissatisfied with other expressions or other omissions in the public worship or in the appointed forms thereof, besides those which I have mentioned; they may be also dissatisfied to have communion in worship with a congregation of deists, or with mere unitarian worshippers, if they profess the holy scripture and the trinity. Many sects may declare their consciences are really dissatisfied with this worship, because all men are bound to offer their best *unto God,* and they would complain that such mere natural wor-

ship is far below the best that they could offer; now the state has no power to compel the consciences of men to join in that worship of God which they dislike or disapprove as unworthy of him or unacceptable to him, provided that they do every thing else that is necessary to become faithful members of the state.

SECT. VII.—*Of particular Religions supposed to be revealed.*

I. Supposing that some public worship must be authoritatively required or maintained in a state, for the welfare of the state itself, let us enquire further then how it is possible to be done without infringing natural liberty. Besides the general principles of natural religion which seem reasonable and proper to be made known to all the people, as has been before declared, there may be several particular sects in the nation, both among the governors and governed, who have other special articles of faith and other peculiar rules of practice or worship, ceremony or sacrifice, over and above these natural and moral doctrines or duties. And these peculiarities of religion are believed to come to them by a revelation from the God they worship, or from men who were taught of God, which is much the same.

II. Now if public worship must be maintained, every man would chuse to do it in his own way: And every man, both governor and governed, ought to have full liberty to worship his God in that special way and manner which his own conscience believes to be of divine appointment, or which he thinks to be most necessary, in order to secure the special favour of his God and his own future happiness. This is a personal obligation which natural conscience, or the light of reason, which *is the candle of the Lord* within us, lays on every individual person among mankind; supposing always that this peculiar religion does not break in upon the just rights or the peace of our neighbours. And indeed if it does unjustly invade their peace or their natural or civil rights, this seems to be sufficient evidence that it does not come from God, who is the original author and supreme guardian of the natural rights of his creatures: Nor will any wise and righteous government indulge such mischievous pretences of conscience or divine revelation, though in any other case, I see not that any governors have a right to forbid it.

III. The great God who gave us all reason and conscience, never appointed the conscience, nor the reason, nor the will of one man absolutely to appoint the religious duties of another; except always in case of infancy, where conscience or reason is not grown up to its proper exercise, and parents are entrusted with the education and the religion of their children till they can learn for themselves the knowledge of God and their duty to him. The phantom or chimera of an universal conscience given by God himself to all supreme ruling powers for the authoritative guidance and sway of the ruled in every nation in religious

affairs, is so poor and sorry a pretence, and is big with such absurdities, that it is now banished out of the books and opinions of every nation where liberty is known; nor should it ever be recalled or revived lest God, as the author of all civil government should be made the author and commander of all that idolatry and superstition, which the governors of this world may command.

IV. Where persons therefore profess the obligations of conscience to any revealed religion, and claim the right of worship which arises thence, it must always be granted; but still with this proviso, as was said before, that none of these pretences to divine revelation, none of these peculiar forms or practices, to which men profess to be bound by their consciences, be inconsistent with the peace of the state, the welfare of their neighbours, and the support of the civil government: For it is not to be supposed that the great God would ever reveal and appoint any thing to be believed or practised as a matter of religion, by creatures who must dwell under some civil government, which should be inconsistent with civil government itself or the common and social welfare of mankind. For this very reason it is that no religion hath a right to be tolerated which professes and maintains the persecutions of other religions, or which binds down persons under penalties to act in the things of God contrary to their consciences: because this is injurious to mankind in general, and invades the just and natural liberties of men, and thereby breaks in upon the peace of the state. And for the same reason no person, whatsoever religion he professes, can claim toleration for himself in the practice of it, who asserts and maintains a right to persecute other religions besides his own: Such a person is a common nuisance to a state, for his principles are inconsistent with the peace of civil society: And besides, what reason can he have to claim that toleration for himself which he refuses to others?

V. Where particular persons of the same religion shall unite in societies for religious purposes, with this proviso of the safety of the state, there the state has not only no right nor authority to forbid them, but the rulers of the state are obliged to guard and protect them from insults and injuries in the employment of all their natural liberties and these invaluable rights of conscience; and they are obliged by their office to maintain these rights of their people, in opposition to all the public scandal and outrage with which persons of different religions might be tempted to treat each other: For all magistrates are guardians of the peace of the state, and of all the natural rights and liberties of mankind, in things relating to God or man. The great rule is happily expressed by our Saviour; Mat. xxii. 21. *Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that*

are God's. The peace of the state, and its civil welfare belongs to Cæsar, and he is to be honoured and supported by proper tribute for this purpose; but conscience belongs only to God, and no Cæsar on earth hath any right to invade it.'

VI. Nor has any civil ruler whatsoever any right to enquire or command the people to profess and practise that peculiar religion which he himself professes, under any penalties, because the peculiarities of this or of any other sect of religion are not necessary for the good of the state. A man may be in all respects as useful and valuable a member and supporter of the state, though he profess and practise such a peculiar religion as is very different from what the rulers profess or practise, and in some respects, perhaps contrary to it.

VII. Whatsoever sects or societies of men agree together in any of these supposed revealed religions, or any religious ceremonies, forms or practices, which their consciences think necessary, they must agree also upon particular times and places for their peculiar exercises of public worship; and they must support and maintain the expences of them out of their own personal property, or at their own charge.

VIII. But that the state may take no umbrage or suspicion, at the religious assemblies of persons who differ from the religion of the rulers, as though they were designed for seditious purposes; and that every person may secure his full freedom to exercise his own peculiar religion according to his conscience without disturbance, it may be proper, if not necessary, that wheresoever ten or twelve or twenty persons, more or less, shall agree upon such a special or peculiar religion, and fix a place for their worship, they shall give notice of it to some public magistrate or public court, and let their religion and their place be be registered under some particular name which they shall chuse for themselves. Mr. Locke is so much of this mind in two or three articles of his laws drawn up for Carolina*, that he hardly thinks any person fit for the protection of the state and all the civil privileges thereof, if his name be not registered at seventeen years of age in some one or other worshipping society; I beg leave indeed to query, whether seventeen years are an age of sufficient discretion for every young person to determine that point. Perhaps the age of one and twenty may be early enough.

IX. As places must be agreed upon for social worship, so also must the time. Now suppose the time which some particular sects agree upon for their exercises of religion are believed by them to be made sacred for worshipping by divine appointment, such as Friday of the Turks, Saturday of the Jews, and Sunday of the christians; and suppose these very days or part

* These few articles are the only things I consulted while I was drawing up this essay.

of these days should be appointed by the state for some civil purposes; as for instance, if in a Heathen or a Turkish government the people should be required to appear at a public market, or at a court of justice for witnesses or jury-men, or for a public taxation, or for exercise of the militia on a Saturday or Sunday, surely I think the state could not be censured and made criminal for appointing such a day for these purposes, unless they did it on purpose to distress any of their subjects*. But what must a Jew or a christian do in such a case? Or what penalties may the state enact for the neglect of obedience to this law? I answer in the first place,

X. Answer I. That if the thing required be an action really and plainly necessary for the present and immediate welfare and preservation of the state or country, the Jew or the christian might innocently comply with the call of the state in a christian or in a Jewish country, and then it is certainly lawful to do the same in Turkey; as for instance, the repelling of an invasion, the stopping of a general inundation, the quenching of fire, and the preservation of lives from imminent destruction. This is allowed on all hands, and is not esteemed a criminal profanation of sacred time.

XI. Answer II. But if the scrupulous subjects see no such necessity in the case, for the preservation of the state or the welfare and lives of men, or if the state command such actions as may be really necessary in themselves; but which are not necessary at that particular time, and which in their opinion would criminally profane the days that the Jews or christians call holy; then it seems proper and necessary that the Jew should preserve his Saturday as well as the christian his Sunday sacred for rest and divine worship, as preferring *obedience to God rather than men:* And I think he must consequently submit to such penalties as the state thinks necessary for the public welfare. I see not how this can be avoided. The state must be the judge.

XII. The state therefore in such cases, as I said before, ought to enjoin no other penalty for such neglects, than a wise and tender father would impose upon a child who loves and honours him, when he is constrained to neglect some part of his father's commands in order to obey God and his conscience: And the penalty or forfeit of each man for neglect in such a case must necessarily be small, when it is measured by and adjusted to the

* I think the state could not be made criminal for appointing such a day for civil affairs, which some or other of their subjects may count sacred, unless they did it on purpose to distress their people, because there may be seven religions professed among all the numerous inhabitants of a land, and each of these may claim a distinct day of the week as sacred: What, must these civil affairs then *have no one* day appointed for the transaction of them, because every day that *could be* named would interfere with the profession or pretences of some sect *or other.*

detriment which it is supposed the state may receive from each single person's absence or neglect of the required hour and civil service appointed by the state. Or if the penalty should be reduced a little below the detriment the state can be supposed to sustain by the neglect, I think it would not be amiss, since it is an expression of tenderness to the consciences of good men, who are in all respects faithful and obedient to the state.

XIII. Answer III. And after all, every private person must be left to his own conscience, to judge or determine how far the action required by the state would profane the day which he calls sacred, and whether God calls him to comply with the orders of state, or to refuse it, and submit to the penalty: Always supposing that the christian should not entirely neglect the public worship of God on a Sunday, nor the Jew on a Saturday; but as far as possible, should chuse those hours for the worship of God, which are best suited to the conveniency of the state and the general ease of those of his own sect: Nor do I think in such cases God would be found a rigorous or hard master.

XIV. And perhaps this may be one reason why the institution of the christian sabbath or Sunday, is not so plain and express in the New Testament, nor the rules of the observation of it so evident, nor so strict and particular as the sabbath of the Jews: viz. because the church of Christ being to be raised up in all nations, the consciences of young christians might be put under too severe a bondage in some places, where the demands of the state might greatly interfere with the religion of the Sunday; especially if the peculiar obligations to keep the day were so very strict, and the prohibitions were so severe as was enjoined to the Jews.

XV. Yet still I think it must be granted, if we would keep up any serious sense of religion and the returns of public worship, *one day in seven* is little enough in general to be devoted to that purpose, which both the Jews and christians believe to be divinely appointed.

XVI. As for the times and places of public worship in general, the magistrate has certainly so much to do in them, as not to suffer assemblies under pretence of religion, to meet in such places and at such times, as may give any just and reasonable umbrage to the state, that sedition or gross immoralities are practised there. And if any society should think fit to keep their assemblies in caves, and lurking holes at midnight, the magistrate may always demand an officer to be present with such assemblies, to take care that the state received no damage, and that morality and peace be preserved in the state: Or perhaps he may generally suppress such meetings, in such places and seasons, *where there is just and* evident reason for suspicion of such *wicked practices, notwithstanding* all pretences of conscience:

For I am persuaded the great God, the Author of all civil society and government, will never require any such sort of worship, nor at such times or places, as shall endanger the peace and welfare of cities and nations. Let but rulers allow such liberty for worship, as God and nature demand, there will be no ground for any body to seek such places or times for social worship, as can give just umbrage to any state or government.

SECT. VIII.—*Of a particular Religion professed by the Ruling Powers.*

I. Another question arises here. If the supreme power of the state or civil government professes some particular revealed religion, or worships the great God with some peculiar modes and ceremonies of its own, may not the rulers of the state authorise and appoint men to be public teachers of their own religion in all the forms and ceremonies thereof? And may not these men celebrate these ceremonies by public authority, and lead others into the worship of their God according to these special forms and ceremonies? And may not the rulers appoint these teachers or priests to be paid out of the public revenue, or by tithes, &c. that is, tenths or twelfths of the improvement of the land, or by any taxes imposed by the government? To this I answer,

II. Answer. That every governor, every teacher, and every single person seems to have a natural right and liberty not only to practise their own religion themselves, but to persuade as many as they can to worship the God they worship, and that in and by their own approved forms. If duty to God should not require it, benevolence and love to our neighbours will incline men to this: But we must attempt it so far only as reason and persuasion can prevail, without any compulsion or force, for conscience and religion must be ever free: Whatsoever is done by mere compulsion or terror of men is not hearty and voluntary, and therefore it is not religion, and can never be pleasing to the great God.

III. But I cannot yet see any sufficient reason why a state should appoint the peculiarities of any revealed religion, or the special rites and ceremonies of any particular worshippers, or the men who celebrate them to be supported at the public charge: For these peculiarities are not necessary to the preservation of the state, nor to the common outward civil welfare of a people; and I think the power of the magistrate reaches no further.

Nor will I venture to say that taxes or tenths, or twelfths, or any subsidy should be raised by the state for any other end, than the civil welfare of the state requires. If a heathen prince impose a tenth penny on all his subjects, as a tax to maintain *heathen* worship, would a christian willingly pay it, and think *himself* bound in conscience to do it? Is not this evidently the

reason, why the people called quakers in our nation at home or abroad, refuse to pay the tithes to the clergy of the church of England, or of other christian churches, because they preach and practise many things in religion which the quakers do not believe, which the light of nature and reason does not dictate, and which are not necessary to the outward and civil welfare of mankind*.

IV. But it may be further enquired here, may not those teachers or publishers of the civil laws, or the moral duties of natural religion, which are before allowed to be paid out of the civil list, that is, by taxes on the people; I say, may not these men take an opportunity, when the people are met to hear civil and moral lectures, at the same time to instruct the people in the knowledge of the peculiar religion of their governors, and exhort them to comply with the rites and ceremonies thereof, and to join with them in their practice? To this I answer as before,

V. Answer. That it does not appear plain to me that taxes of any kind should ever be imposed on the people, in order to encourage and maintain the peculiar ceremonies of sacrifices, preachings or ministrations of any supposed revealed religion beyond what is natural, or what is necessary for the state. Such taxes may perhaps, with as much justice be imposed to maintain, any other expensive or curious and capricious humours of a prince, which have no relation to the civil welfare or to religion. And besides, this imposition of such a tax might give a disgust to some of the people, who profess a very different religion, and hinder or discourage them from coming to hear the laws of the land, and lectures of moral virtue, which the state requires to be published and taught at that time and in that place. Would not a christian subject under a Pagan or Mahometan prince, think it hard to be required to hear lectures of the Alcoran, and of Mahomet's follies, or of the reveries of the heathen priests and poets, of Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, Diana, &c. from week to week, instead of moral or civil laws? And perhaps their consciences might be much offended at it, and they might be tempted to neglect their attendance on, and acquaintance with the civil and moral laws, if they are mingled in the same lecture with

* I do not by any means here pretend to vindicate the refusal of tithes and fees to the church in our nation; for they are to be considered as a civil or national tax or incumbrance, belonging to every piece of land or house bought or rented, and so appointed by our laws; and therefore every man knowingly buys or hires his land or his house with this incumbrance fixed on it, and belonging to those whom the state appoints to receive and possess it. But in the first rising or erecting a civil government of which I am speaking throughout this essay, one would not chuse to have such laws made, or such taxes or incumbrances established *at first, which would afford* any colour and occasion, for such *refusal or disobedience in times to come*, as may arise from real scruples *conscience.*

Alcorans and Talmuds, and Homer's Hymns to the rabble of heathen gods.

VI. Yet I think this may be allowed, that at the end of the moral or civil lectures the magistrate, when an assembly is gathered, may appoint the lectures, or exercises, or celebrations of his own peculiar religion to follow them, provided the people have notice of it, and as many as please are permitted to depart without penalty or reproach: And provided always the preacher is not paid out of the public money, for any thing he does over and above these moral or civil lectures, which are needful for the good of the state.

VII. And it is certain, this further allowance may be made, viz. that as any rich man may at his own private expence, or out of his own property maintain poets, philosophers, singers, teachers or priests, to preach and practise the doctrines and ceremonies of his own peculiar religion, provided they teach and act nothing inconsistent with the welfare of the state; so a prince or supreme power, may maintain teachers of the mathematics, philosophers, poets, star-gazers, or priests and preachers of his religion, out of that part of his possession or revenue which is properly his own, or his personal property, and is designed for the support of himself and family and common equipage, even though it may be allotted him by the state or the laws of the land. For if there ought to be a toleration of all religions which interfere not with the good of the state, and private persons may support the teachers and priests of their own religion out of their own property, I see no sufficient reason why the supreme power or the governor should be debarred from the same privilege; and as he is supposed to be richer than any of the people, so he may maintain more priests or preachers of his own religion than others can. And this practice might be so managed by the governing powers of any nation, if they are christian, and truly zealous for their religion and their Saviour, that would not in the least break in upon human liberty, and yet might give very great countenance and encouragement to christianity, and assist in spreading it through all the nation by degrees; or indeed any other religion for which the ruling powers are zealous. I add also, that a religion thus professed, and supported, by the beneficence of a prince or supreme powers, may be in some sense called an established religion, because it is supported by the rulers above and beyond any other form of religion.

VIII. But suppose the supreme and legislative powers of any state, should join the revenue or taxes, which they raise for the public support of government, with that revenue which they allow the prince for his private or domestic expence and his royal equipage, so that they are not distinguished: Has not the prince then a much larger power in his hands to promote his or

peculiar religion by money, whether it be Pagan, Turkish, or Christian? So far as I can see, it may be answered thus:

III. Answer. Surely the legislative powers by mingling the revenues for the support of the government, with that of the domestic expence and equipage of the prince's family and court, have put it very much into the power and will of the prince, to to lay out more or less money yearly for the maintenance and honour of his person, his court and his family as he shall see fit; always provided that the welfare and honour and offices of the state suffer no detriment, but have full allowance made for them.

In the same manner we may reason about the expences employed in buildings, paintings, mathematic sciences or any of his own curiosities, or for the support of his own peculiar religion. If he maintain the necessary officers of the state in proper dignity, and keep up the necessary honours of his own court and household, as the dignity of his post requires, he has a liberty to save more money by prudence and thriftiness for any lawful diversions, or buildings, or philosophical experiments, or the practice and propagation of his own religion, &c. I say, he may save so much more of his revenue for such purposes and practices, than if these civil expences were distinctly settled and limited by distinct parts of the revenue appropriated to each.

X. But if many of the people should be of a different sect, and should find that the prince saves and withholds too much money from the uses of the state and his public honour, and that he expends too much upon the practice and propagation of a religion which they disapprove, it is possible they may grow uneasy and murmur at the largeness of their taxes imposed on them, which they daily observe to be spent, not in civil government, but in propagating a disagreeable religion: And in this case every such prince must be left to his own prudence, to judge how far his zeal to promote any peculiar religion, by such large and constant expences, should be indulged to the dissatisfaction of his subjects.

Sect. IX.—*Of a Religion established among the Rulers and Officers of the State.*

I. After all our enquiries we have not hitherto found any one religion, whether natural or revealed, or pretending to revelation, which can be authoritatively established by the state through all the nation, and by that authority can justly demand or require the attendance and compliance of all the people under any penalty. Let us see then whether some one religion may not be established among all the ruling powers, and demand the attendance of the supreme and subordinate magistrates and officers of the land, and this would be some sort of established religion.

II. I enquire here then in the first place, whether the supreme power or powers or legislators of the state may not make laws, which shall constitute and require the religion which he or they profess, to be practised by all who are admitted to the civil or military offices thereof; and whether such a law may not rightfully exclude all persons who refuse to comply with this religion. Some are entirely of this opinion; and the reason given for it is this: Surely every master in a family may refuse to take any servant who is not qualified as he requires; as for instance, one who does not believe the bible, one who cannot speak French or Dutch, one who is not willing to wear his livery, or who scruples to take an oath. Here is no injury done to any person whatsoever; for no man has a right to come into another man's house or family, and be made his servant, or to enjoy any post in his household, but by his appointment or order. Now military and civil officers in the state are but as servants in a great family; and no hurt is done to any subject in their natural or civil rights or properties, if they are constantly continued as subjects under the protection of the ruling powers, though they are not made officers or rulers in the state, because they have no right to it. To this enquiry I would make the following answers:

III. Answer I. It is granted that a master of a family has a right to take or exclude what persons he thinks proper for the service and welfare of his own private house, for they were not members of his family before they were taken into it: So the ruling power may chuse what persons and what officers he pleases for his own household, his personal affairs, his guards, and his own public equipage and honour, without any injury done to other persons, who never had any pretence, by station or merit, to be received into the royal household or the guards, as a part or member thereof. But the officers of a state, or magistrates of the country, stand in a very different character from the servants in a family, because every subject is already a member of the state, and if he has behaved well therein, he should at least stand capable of the preferments and offices of his country, as what he has merited by his good character and behaviour, as a subject in that state of which he is a part or member: Nor is it reasonable or just, that a capacity of preferment should be taken from him by the law, but for some civil crime or misdemeanor, because such an incapacity fixed by law, is a public reproach or civil punishment. I answer in the second place:

IV. Answer II. That it is possible the supreme ruling power, may at present profess a different religion from almost all the people, or may fall into such different sentiments, and then surely it dot not seem to be reasonable or fair to confine all inferior magistrates or officers to the religion of the supreme Ruler, *and to forbid* the people ever to have any ruling officer among

them, who is of their own religion, or to bind down all the officers, who must keep the people under due regulation and observance of the laws, to a peculiar religion which the bulk of the people dislike, and perhaps abhor. Would not this universal separation and opposition of religions, probably beget such a strangeness and ill-will between the rulers and the ruled, as might in a great measure endanger those bonds of union and love, and mutual good offices, which should be always reciprocally maintained between the rulers and the ruled? Would it not tend to provoke the people to sedition, and can it be ever esteemed true policy to follow such a conduct, as would bring such undesirable and dangerous consequences with it? I answer thirdly:

V. Answer III. By way of concession. When the supreme ruling powers and far the greatest part of the people are of one and the same religion, I think it cannot be unlawful, nor is it improper for them generally to chuse the subordinate ruling officers out of those persons who are of the same religion with the prince and the people: And while things continue so, there may seem to be good reasons for this conduct in the present disposition of human affairs. It may help to secure and establish union and love, and unanimity and mutual respect, between the rulers and ruled in any government: Which is of great importance to the welfare of the state. But if there be a very considerable number of the people professing any other religion, I query whether it can be political wisdom to exclude them from every public office absolutely and universally without exception? And it may be another query, whether it may be an instance of wise conduct in any such nation, to make a law which shall incapacitate a man to be an officer in the state, merely because he professes a different religion; which difference in truth, hath nothing to do with civil government? Or can it be proper, to put such a man under a perpetual disability by the sentence of a law, who is wise and good, who is strictly faithful to the state, who is acceptable to the people, and hath great personal merit and fitness, to supply a vacant post of profit or honour?

And it may be said yet further, that in some constitutions of government, the towns and cities, and particular districts and divisions, may have a right to chuse their own officers; and must a man of such an excellent character as I have described, and who is much desired by all the inhabitants, be rendered useless in government, merely because his conscience obliges him to worship God in another manner than the prince does? And should the people be for ever deprived of their ancient right to chuse such a person into office, and enjoy the benefit of his talents and virtues? *However it is* evident, that if a particular religion *be professed by the people and* their governors both supreme and

subordinate, it may be well enough called the national reli gion, since the greatest part of the nation profess the sam religion with the supreme power in it, and generally all th subordinate powers profess it also; though if it be not estab lished under any legal requirements and penalties, some person may doubt, whether it can be so well pronounced an establishe religion in the full propriety of the words. In the fourth plac I answer:

VI. Answer IV. Suppose a whole nation, both rulers an people should agree in the present age so far, as actually to hav no magistrates or officers supreme or subordinate, chosen or ap pointed, but who profess such a peculiar religion as they them selves profess; yet considering that we are all fallible creature and that our knowledge is very imperfect, and our opinions ar very changeable, considering also that the changes and revolu tions of human affairs, and the situation of them are very variou I query whether it be a piece of wisdom in any state, to mak such laws like the Medes and Persians, which shall never b altered in all times to come. Who knows what future occur rences may arise, wherein it may be necessary for a state to d that in one age for its own preservation and advantage, whic was not proper in former years? And who knows, what furthe views may arise in the minds of the ruling powers throug longer observation and experience, which may shew them ho reasonable it is to repeal laws that have been formerly made though at that time, they might generally be thought necessar Surely it can be no piece of wisdom for a person or a family or kingdom, by any present resolution or law to preclude themselve and their posterity for ever from all possible advantages tha might arise from the change or repeal of it in future times. I the last place:

VII. Answer V. I would make the supposition, that th present religion both of prince and people is heathen idolatry and then I would make these few queries following: viz.

Query I. If such a law had been made in every nation i the days of heathenism, to exclude all but heathens and idolater from public posts, I query whether the government of all th European as well as eastern nations, must not have continue for ever heathen? And whether any secular power or govern ment in Europe, could ever have regularly become christian Now surely it would be hard to say, that that could hav been an equitable law which should for ever exclude a chris tian prince from the throne in every nation of Europe, an forbid christian officers ever to have been established amongs *them.*

II. Whether the understanding and conscience of prince o *people* who made such a law, might not in time gain furt

light and knowledge, so as actually to cast off their old heathen religion, since the light of conscience ought to be obeyed? But must every one of them lose their present civil rights by this their increase of knowledge and obedience to God and conscience? Must the prince, if he turns christian, lose all his authority, or the officers their civil or military power, merely because they have forsaken idolatry, and worshipped *the one true God through Jesus Christ;* still supposing, that all of them are faithful to fulfil their present posts in the state, and all their duties to it? The absurdity of this would yet more abundantly appear, if the bulk of the people were become christians too, and longed for a christian magistrate. What must both people and prince be eternal slaves to such a law, which their ancestors made in the time of ignorance? Must a christian people for ever be obliged to have heathen magistrates because their heathen ancestors once made such a law? Surely the very light of nature teaches us that the prince and the people, may join to reverse such a law whensoever they feel the mischief and slavery that attends it; and would they be wise, to try the same experiment again, when they have once felt the inconvenience and bondage of it?

III. May not some excellent persons be found, who are fit for any post or office in the government, whether supreme or subordinate, who may profess the gospel of Christ, and thus differ from the heathen religion which is established by this law? Persons I say, whom the people themselves would wish to be their rulers and governors, and persons who by the constitution have as much right to it as any others, excepting only their peculiar religion. In an elective government, why should the people be forbid to chuse such supreme governors among them, only because they are christians? And why should the supreme power in any kingdom or government whatsoever, be forbid to make the fittest persons he can find, officers in the army and the state, merely because they are christians? Or if particular cities or towns or counties have a right by the constitution to chuse their own magistrates or officers, why should they be hindered from enjoying the benefit of such magistrates as are supposed to be wisest and fittest, merely because they profess christianity? Can this be for the welfare of the state which the rulers and the ruled are all bound to consult? Can it be any advantage to a state to have worse officers chosen into any post, supreme or subordinate, and to have much fitter persons rejected, and that merely because they hold some christian opinions and practices, which have nothing to do with the state any further, than to teach and incline all men in all stations to make mankind more safe and happy.

VIII. Thus far may be argued, if the religions are entirely

different in the very foundations and substance of them, as the heathen and the christian. But if the religions in contest be very nearly the same, and differ only in some circumstantials, there can never be so much reason why there should be so great a difference made between them in the disposal of public offices of trust or profit; for the dangers of any kind that can arise from such promiscuous officers is not so great or formidable. This therefore in such enquiries should always come into the consideration.

IX. But after all, if in any nation a great majority of the people together with the supreme rulers, be of one religion or one sect, and several othersects of the same religion are dispersed throughout the land, I cannot see any hurt in it, as I said before, if the ruling powers generally chuse and appoint persons of their own sect to be officers of the state; supposing still they do not exclude others by a law, and thereby lay a public reproach or odium upon those who have no way deserved it. If there be a just and complete toleration of every such sect or religion, as doth not hinder the public peace of the state, I do not see that the lesser sects have reason to complain, that they are not actually made rulers and officers of the state; provided always that there are no offices of burden and expence imposed upon them, while they are not called into any offices of honour or profit.

And if there are persons of worth and value, very fit in all respects to sustain public offices, and yet are of a different religion or different sect from the chief rulers and the bulk of the people, I think it must be determined by the wisdom of the rulers to judge where the superior balance lies, between the advantages arising from the good qualifications of the person, and the dangers which may arise from the difference of his religion; and accordingly they must determine whether it be fit to entrust him with any such public office or no, to which he has no claim by nature or by law. Here an objection will arise from this concession, viz. If the supreme rulers should judge, that the superior balance of wisdom lies in guarding against the danger of persons of a different religion constantly, why may not this be expressed and confirmed by a law, which is but the constant and final determination of the supreme rulers? But I answer as before,

I. That, perhaps, it would not be just by a law, to lay any mark of infamy, any public odium or civil incapacity on persons, merely on account of their religion, where in all other respects they deserve well of the state. Besides,

II. The present determination of any supreme ruler not *to make such* or such a man an officer or magistrate, because *of the ruler's* jealousy of his religion, reaches but to the pre-

sent time and the present situation of affairs, and this will answer all the just and reasonable purposes of a supreme ruler: But to establish such a law, lays a long and constant odium, or public reproach as well as incapacity, on that whole sect or party for time to come, when it may be the best interest of the state to have that very officer, or a magistrate of that religion, chosen or fixed in such a station. See section ix. And,

III. I enquire, whether in many cases this would not be found direct persecution for conscience: If ever so worthy a man be employed for several years in a heathen country, in an office of honour or profit, or both, and he be convinced and professes christianity, would not such a law, which excludes christians from all offices, turn him out of his place and livelihood, and perhaps leave him and his family to starve? The same case may happen, where any law is made to seclude any different sects of the same religion from all offices.

X. Yet in order to secure the peace and welfare of the state, and the common good of mankind, which is the great end of government, I would here venture to enquire whether there are not two sorts of persons, who may be constantly and rightfully excluded even by a law, from any supreme or subordinate offices in the state, and that merely upon the account of their religion or some wicked articles in it.

XI. First, When the religion which any person professes, contains such pernicious articles in it, and especially if it has been frequently attended with such correspondent practices from time to time, as give abundant evidence and example that the principles of that religion, encourage and authorize men to invade the peace of the state, the rights of the prince, and the civil or religious liberties, the property and welfare of the people. Thence I would take leave to enquire, whether or no the popish religion, by its persecuting and bloody principles, as well as by its subjection to a foreign potentate or prince, even the Pope of Rome, who pretends to absolve men from the most solemn and sacred bonds; I say, whether this Roman religion has not made it effectually appear, that neither princes nor people can be safe wheresoever the papists have power*: For I take all those principles of religion which allow the deposing of

* Let it be observed here, that this scheme does not allow any prince or state to persecute the papists in the least degree on the account of their worshipping images, or making a piece of bread their God, and adoring it as the body of Jesus Christ; nor for any fooleries or idolatries in their religion, which do not injure the public welfare in things natural or civil. Not a farthing of their money, nor a hair of their head should be taken away on this account. But if they will profess and maintain such opinions and principles about the powers of a priest or a pope to absolve them of their oaths, and to break all their bands of duty to the civil government, and to their fellow subjects, I see not how they can claim any protection from the state, much less an admission into any post of trust or profit, as appears *in the next paragraphs.*

kings and the persecuting of people, merely on account of religion, to be unjust in themselves, and inconsistent with the welfare of any state; and consequently I query whether any wise state should ever admit of such rulers or officers in any post whatsoever of high or low degree, unless they can first clear themselves from these wicked principles. In the second place,

XII. Secondly, I enquire whether persons, whose religion will not permit them to give effectual security of their allegiance to their superiors in the government, or security to the people of their protection, I say, whether persons of such a religion as indulges men in the violation of all such bonds of security, can be safely admitted to be supreme or subordinate officers in any state: For such officers cannot faithfully stipulate or contract with their prince to serve him; nor can rulers or princes of such a religion stipulate with their people to be faithful in their office: Nor do I see any way how such a religion can effectually secure the distinct rights either of people or prince, unless this part of it be absolutely and effectually renounced.

XIII. And indeed, as I have hinted before, such persons among the people who cannot engage by bonds laid upon conscience for their allegiance and faithfulness to any civil government, or who think their religion allows them to break those bonds for the sake of their religion, I do not see how they can claim common protection under any state or government whatsoever; and therefore I think with more abundant evidence, they may be very rightfully excluded by a law from any office therein. And we may be well assured that that religion can never be from God which allows no secure stipulation between prince and people; that is in short, which allows no mutual security in civil government, which in general *is an ordinance of God for the good of mankind.*

Sect. X.—*Of the Power of the Prince in every Worshipping Assembly.*

I. Though the supreme power of any state, has no right to impose the profession or practice of any one peculiar religion upon the people, yet since civil government *is an ordinance of God* as the God of nature for the welfare of mankind, the supreme power in any nation may possibly have a right to command several things to be done in every assembly that meets for divine worship: As,

II. 1. I think they may give it in charge to every religious society, as they are members of the state, that sometimes at least, and upon proper occasions, they should preach up more *duties to men,* as well as the duties of piety towards God; that

they should teach men to be honest and faithful, to be kind and compassionate, to be sober and temperate, and to be dutiful to their civil governors in all those things which the civil powers have a right to demand; and that they should preach against personal and social vices, as slander, theft, adultery, drunkenness, quarrelling, murder, cruelty, cheating, faction, sedition, tumult, rebellion, and the raising animosities and disturbances in the state: Especially where the magistrates, as St. Paul expresses it, *are not a terror to good works but to the evil, and are the ministers of God for good.* This is the design of St. Paul's advice, Rom. xiii. 1—7. *Let every soul be subject to the higher powers.—Whosoever resisteth the powers, resisteth the ordinance of God:—For rulers are not a terror to good works but to the evil. —Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath,* that is, for fear of punishment, *but also for conscience-sake. For, for this cause pay you tribute also.* And he repeats such kind of advice to Titus the preacher, Tit. iii 1, 2.—*Put them in mind, to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work, to speak evil of no man,* &c. All these things being necessary to preserve the civil government and the state in welfare and peace, as well as necessary and essential parts of all the religions that are good for any thing in the world, I think it may lie within the province of the supreme power to require that the people in their religious assemblies, among other lessons, should be instructed in these matters at convenient seasons.

III. 2. I think the supreme power may require also that amongst the addresses or prayers for temporal blessings which are offered up to their God by any societies of men, there should be some petitions put up for the welfare of the government: Surely every man should pray for a spirit of wisdom and justice, and the best of divine blessings upon their rulers. This is the instruction of the apostles to all christians, though it was supposed they lived then under heathen governments; 1 Tim. ii. 1. *I exhort therefore that first of all supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men; for kings and all that are in authority, that under them we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

IV. 3. If magistrates may require every religious assembly, meeting for instruction and prayer, to have lessons of moral duty and allegiance taught them, and to have prayers offered up for the governors in times of prosperity and peace, may they not also when any calamity or danger attends the state or nation, by war, famine, pestilence, tumults, &c. I say, may they not at such seasons appoint a certain day or hours of the day for worshipping assemblies, each to address their God in a way

of prayer*, that these dangers may be prevented, or these calamities removed? Such a civil appointment does not so much as pretend to make the day sacred, and I think it cannot be reasonably scrupled by persons of any religion upon that account.

V. I have turned this question on all sides in my thoughts, and I cannot at present see any criminal imposition upon conscience in such demands of the government: For if the day which happens to be appointed by the magistrate for such a purpose, is held sacred by any religious party in the land, yet surely prayers for the welfare of the state and the nation can never be sinfully offered up upon such a sacred day, that is, it can be no profanation of the day to make such addresses to God. And on the other hand, if the day be not held sacred, the hours appointed to this service are not to be supposed to engross so much time as to hinder them from the businesses of the civil life, beyond what is required by the necessities of the state, or the obligation of the people to promote the public welfare.

VI. And if seasons of prayer may be commanded by the government in cases of public calamity or danger, we may by the same reason conclude also, that seasons of public thanksgiving may be appointed upon any national occasion of returning thanks for public health, peace, and plenty, or special deliverance from distress or danger: Always provided that every religious assembly be permitted to worship their God in their own way and manner on such appointed seasons; for those actions of thanksgiving seem to be a part of natural social religion, in which the welfare of the state is concerned. Perhaps it will be objected here, that by this rule our King James the second, might appoint a day of prayer against King William, or the Prince of Orange, when he came really for the deliverance of the nation from tyranny; or he might appoint a thanksgiving for the birth of the spurious Prince of Wales or the Pretender; for princes will make themselves judges whether occurrences are national dangers or benefits. Answer. Where such things happen, every single person must be a judge of his own actions according to conscience, and must never trifle with God to obey the commands of a king; nor will the commands of a king lay any obligations on conscience in such cases, where it is dubious on which side the true welfare of the nation stands. But in all cases where the danger or the benefit of a nation is most apparent and certain, and universally agreed, I

* Lest it should be objected here, that no magistrate may appoint idolaters on any day to worship idols or false gods, I would say, that the form of the proclamation or public command, should only in general express the worship of *God, which if* any heathen subjects apply to false gods, the magistrate is not to *blame, in my opinion.*

ink a prince may require the religious assistance of the people : the civil welfare.

VII. And perhaps it may not be unlawful, for the civil wer to lay some small penalty upon those, who without just cuse wilfully and rebelliously oppose or renounce any such igious services for the state, that is, in cases of most appa- it danger or blessing: And perhaps a heavier penalty may be pointed for such obstinate and stubborn spirits, as will boldly nsact any thing in public, in such a way of sport or labour, which will be a manifest and public hindrance to the sacred ices required by the magistrate, on the days appointed for blic prayer or thankfulness. We find the king of Nineveh, o was a heathen, was led by the light of nature to appoint, a very strict manner, such a day of humiliation and prayer oughout the city, when they were in imminent danger of struction under the threatenings of God, by the mouth of nah his prophet, Jonah iii. 5—10. And as the light of nature l reason seem to dictate it, so the success of it was agreeable heir desires, and the threatened desolation was prevented. hether the king had a right to command the ceremonies of kcloth and ashes indeed may bear a dispute: But so far as an see, their *crying mightily unto their god*, on some ap- nted day, might be a very lawful and proper command m their king, as a father and protector of the people, and should think the people might be bound to obey it. But l, as I said before, it must be in such cases only, where they satisfied the true interest and welfare of the nation demands In dubious cases every man must have leave to judge for nself, and no man's conscience should be bound to pray those things which he believes in his heart to be a public evance or danger, or to pray against what he believes to be ublic blessing, however the civil powers may enjoin or re- ire it.

VII. Here then it will be said, if the magistrate may for- any thing that gives public interruption to the solemnity of h national fasting or thanksgiving days by laws and penalties, evident cases of national dangers or blessings, or may he by laws and penalties forbid also the common labours or rts of men on those days, which he himself believes sacred God and religion? This argument may be further enforced s: In a christian country, where prince and people are chiefly istians, may not the prince forbid all his subjects, whether istians or pagans, Turks or Jews, to labour or sport publicly the first day of the week, since it is manifest that the indul- ice of such sports or labours on that day would be an offence l a snare to the christians, a means of corrupting their chil- n and *families, &c. and* hinder them in the learning or the

celebration of the christian religion? To answer this question impartially,

IX. Answer. Let us turn the tables, and suppose the ruling powers, and the greatest part of the people to be Mahometans; and then enquire, whether they may not command every person of what religion soever, to abstain from all public sports and labours on a Friday, because it is manifest that the indulgence of them would be an offence to Mahometans, and a means of hindering their children and families from the learning or celebration of some parts of the Mahometan worship. If this be allowed, it is certain, whatsoever a Mahometan prince has a right to do in his own country, a christian prince has a right to do the same in his. But unless this prohibition of public sports and labours on any certain day, can be reasonably construed to the natural and civil welfare of the state or the people, it may be doubted whether any prince, either heathen, christian, or Mahometan, has a right to forbid any of his people to get their livelihood by public labour one day in a week, merely because it is accounted religious and sacred, by him and the greatest part of his subjects. I say, this may be doubted and would bear a dispute, nor will I pretend to determine here absolutely on this argument.

X. Therefore I add further: God himself when he was king of the Jews, or their civil ruler, appointed one day in seven, that is, Saturday or their sabbath, as a proper season for the natural rest and repose of animals, both of man and beast, as well as for his own worship in public assemblies, and that under severe penalties; and *the stranger within the gates* was obliged to submit to it. It is true, the great God well knew that one day in seven was the most proper and just proportion of time for the rest and repose of animal nature, and for the celebration of public religion: And therefore princes and states who know this, should appoint the same proportion. But since God as the king of the Jews, appointed this seventh-day, there seems to be some reason for us to say, that even princes who know not this divine appointment, may assume this authority to require their subjects to devote *one day in seven*, or ten, or twelve to the rest and repose of nature, for the God of nature has informed us by the fourth commandment, this is for the good of the people: And the prince may forbid, at least, all public labours on that day, and public diversions too, that all his subjects may have leisure, and may be encouraged to maintain and practise some religion, and to pay some public worship to their God without interruption or molestation. This seems also to be needful for the civil interest of the state or the whole people, as has been proved before. But as this day was Saturday when God was the king of the Jews, so in a Mahometan country this day will be Friday; in a christian nation it will be Sunday; *in heathen* nations perhaps other days would be appointed, and

it is impossible in this case to gratify every religious sect or party in a nation.

XI. Now if any weekly day whatsoever, be devoted to natural rest or to the worship of a god in a country, as it serves the natural or civil interest of mankind, surely that very day seems most proper which the bulk of the people shall chuse, and especially if both the rulers and the majority of the people agree in the same; even though the reason of their agreement is because they think it sacred to religion: Nor have the lesser sects or parties any reason to complain, that for the general good they are forbid public labours or sports, one day in a week. Upon this foot I think the final prohibition of public sports, labour or traffic on Sundays in a christian country may be vindicated. But if any particular sects think other days more sacred than those which are appointed by the government, they should never be constrained to work or labour on those days, except the necessity of the state requires it, as I have before shewn.

XII. These are some of the powers, which I think a prince or a ruler may lay claim to in every religious society. And perhaps there may be yet a further right that the supreme civil power may have in religious societies, viz. wheresoever there is any colour or ground for suspicion that the members of these societies are doing any thing to the detriment of the public peace, there the prince may require the presence of some civil officer to inspect and see that nothing be done contrary to the welfare of the state: Always requiring at the same time that this officer make no manner of disturbance in the religious practices of this society, where the offices of the civil government are not invaded, nor the public peace injured. If the prince has a right to do this in any other societies, where he has reason to suspect sedition, why may he not do it in religious societies also?

XIII. There are some other instances of power in things sacred which princes have claimed; and even some of the best of our former writers in speaking of these matters, have allowed more power to civil governors in such points, than either reason or scripture will support. They have permitted princes to call and dismiss or conclude synods for settling religious controversies, to direct their meetings and to preside over them? some have authorized them to adjust what crimes shall be subjected to church-censures, and what not, as well as to execute those censures: They have given them power to determine circumstances in divine worship and to regulate all things of outward mode, form and ceremony, relating to order and decency, &c. But I can find no sufficient ground to justify these pretences either in reason or scripture*.

* That excellent writer Baron Puffendorf has fallen into these few mistakes, in that valuable little discourse of his concerning "The Relation between Church and State; or how far the Christian and Civil Life affect each

XIV. I know it will be objected here, that those few rights and powers, which I have allowed to princes and states, do not arise to the notion of an established church: But in every nation there must be some establishment of religion, say they there must be some national church, or settled worship appointed by the state, without which religion cannot subsist. Answer No particular religion or worship can be fully established by civil powers without some sort of penalties, on those people or officers who comply not with it; and is not this very doctrine of the necessity of an established religion, and an established church, which has fixed so many wicked and mischievous religions throughout the world, and which hath excluded the only true religion of Christ and the New Testament, out of most of the nations of the earth in former and later ages? And shall christian and protestant rulers, think that things so necessary in civil government, which is liable to such horrid consequences and which they so much complain of in all other rulers; as being highly injurious to God and men, and to the religion of the blessed Jesus.

XV. And I cannot but remark here, that there are many persons highly zealous for an established religion, who are ever urging the pattern of the primitive churches, and especially that of the three first centuries, as the standard and rule to which our present christianity should be reduced, in discipline and worship: They are ever informing us what a glorious thing the christian religion was in those days, how divinely the church flourished, and grew in piety and devotion, as well as in numbers, and in every spiritual grace and beauty. We allow this account of the glory of those early churches, and the beauty of holiness, and the amazing success of the gospel which was found among them, though we cannot admit all their practices to be a perfect rule or standard of christianity, which honour belongs only to the New Testament. But let those persons remember that in those three first centuries there was no such thing as a church established by law; and then let all those glories be confessed to belong to the christian church, when it had no national establishment, no royal supports, no settled revenues, no civil power to aggrandize and to adorn it: And let it be remembered too, that when it became an established church under the Emperor Constantine and his successors, its true

other:" Which was translated with an excellent preface, written by Mr. Barbeyrac, and printed in English by John Watts at the Rose in St. Paul's Church-yard, 1719. These chief mistakes or faults may be found from the forty-fifth to the fiftieth section. I could not comply with these opinions, when I read it many years ago: Otherwise I think it is the best book that ever I met with on this subject; and the principles on which it is written, do not only give us a happy clue for the justest sentiments in this controversy, but even contradict and overturn those very mistakes of the author, which he hath slid into for want of care and attention in those sections which are most exceptionable.

glory and spiritual beauty and excellence by degrees faded away, and was almost lost by the visible powers, pomp and honours attending this very establishment. The church of Christ in the New Testament, is built on such a foundation, that it wants nothing of civil power to support it, besides the mere protection of the state, which every christian society may require and expect in common with every other society of men, who are good subjects, and pay all due allegiance to the state in which they dwell.

CONCLUSION.

I. THUS I have given a short account of my best sentiments, how far any sort of public assemblies for hearing lectures on divine, civil, or moral subjects, or the public preaching or celebration of peculiar religions, may be safely established by the state; how far some public worship may be required in general, and especially on particular occasions of the public interest of the state, and how far the people are required to pay their attendance. But I cannot find any sufficient power in the state or government to oblige the nation or particular persons in it under penalties to any form of worship. If I have in any thing exceeded the bounds of the just and reasonable rights of government, or too much limited the just and natural liberties or consciences of mankind, either princes or people, I shall be glad to be better informed in a spirit of meekness and charity, which generally attends the spirit of wisdom and truth.

II. The only maxim by which I have conducted my sentiments through all this scheme, is this, that the power of civil government reaches no further than the preservation of the natural and civil welfare, rights and properties of mankind with regard to this world, and has nothing to do with religion further than this requires: But the special rights of conscience, and the things of religion, as they relate to another world, belong to God only. And the gospel of Christ does not pretend to erect *a kingdom of this world*, and therefore it alters nothing in the nature of civil government; but leaves *to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's;* Mat. xxii. 21.

III. There may be many things which a zealous christian ruler might think very proper to be done for the honour of his God and his Saviour in the public world, and in the management of the state; and indeed he may do much for God in reforming a sinful land; yet in the peculiarities of christianity, I find nothing that can be required or imposed by civil authority, without intrenching upon the rights or liberties of mankind: And I was not willing to indulge any thing to be imposed upon heathen subjects by christian governors, which may not also be counted rea-

sonable and lawful for a heathen governor to impose upon chris tians; because the religion of Christ makes no change in th nature of civil power.

IV. Nor do I know how to vindicate a christian state i propagating their own religion by any such methods of com pulsion or penalty, which a heathen state might not also us for the support and encouragement of theirs: And therefor I cannot see it lawful for any civil power in christendom t suppress the publication of any new, strange, or foreign sect or parties in religion, where they promise and pay due alle giance to the rulers, support the government, maintain th public peace, and molest not the state: Nor do I see goo reason to make any such laws, or execute any such punish ments against the peaceable preachers of any sect or part which we christians should have thought unreasonable or unlaw ful for the civil powers of Athens to have made and execute against St. Paul, when in the midst of a heathen nation o *Mars-hill he preached Jesus and the resurrection;* Acts xvii. 2 In all our reasonings and writings on this important subject, le us take heed to allow no such power or dominion to men, whic would have excluded the best of religions, that is, the religion Christ out of the world.

V. I know it has been said upon these occasions, th the christian magistrate has right to persecute or suppre the Pagan religion, because it is false, whereas the Paga magistrate has no right to suppress christianity, because it true: And though these pretences to truth may be contende on both sides, yet since one may be proved to be true, an the other to be false, truth has always a right on its sic which falsehood can never have. I answer, Every one wh sets up for a persecutor, will pretend he is orthodox, and h the right on his side, and there is no common supreme court judicature that can decide this matter, till the Supreme Judg of all appears in *the last great day:* And therefore since th pretences on either side are not sufficient to determine the ju tice of the persecution, or suppression of the other side, an since there is no common supreme court to which they can bo appeal in this world, it follows evidently that each professi must allow liberty and toleration to the other, where the welfa of the state is secure, and brought into no danger by the pra tices of the inferior party. I might on this occasion recomme a book of Mr. Bayle's, entitled "a Philosophical Commenta on Luke xiv. 23. *compel them to come in,*" written in two volum octavo, wherein after he has gone through all the controver about persecution, he adds a supplement to prove heretics ha as much right to persecute the orthodox, as the orthodox ha to persecute them.

THE APPENDIX,

Wherein the same Sentiments of Just Liberty are confirmed by a View of the Origin of a Christian Church.

I. THE foregoing discourse was begun by tracing out the origin of civil government, and thence inferring the several rights and powers of it, and enquiring how far they would reach in any of the affairs of a religious society, and particularly of a christian church. Let us now take a short survey of the origin of christian churches and enquire whether the setting things in this view will afford any different lights or inferences concerning the power of civil magistrates in things sacred.

II. When the christian religion was first planted, almost all the states, kingdoms and governments of this world were heathens: Even Palestine itself had heathen governors. The blessed apostles travelling amongst the nations, and preaching the gospel wheresoever they could find opportunity, converted multitudes of single persons to the christian faith; these united themselves in little societies by agreement, to assemble together at certain seasons, and worship God by the apostles' directions through Jesus Christ.

III. In some of those same cities wherein christianity was preached, there were or might be also several other societies of men under the same civil government, united together by peculiar agreements among themselves for different purposes, but all subject to the rulers of the state in matters of civil government. Let us now suppose for instance, in the city of Corinth there might be a "college of philosophers, a society of painters or antiquaries, a synagogue of Jews, an assembly of deists, and a church of christians."

IV. Each of these being voluntary societies, they have complete liberty and power to chuse their own presidents, teachers, and other officers out of their own body, as they stood in need of them, in order to regulate the affairs of their society: And they themselves contrive and agree upon rules and laws for the government of their own society, viz. upon what terms persons shall be admitted as members, for what reasons they shall be suspended for a season, or cast out utterly; what times, and places they shall meet in, what forms or ceremonies they shall use in any of their practices, what sum of money, or what utensils, or what goods, or support, or what proportion of these things each member shall furnish or supply toward the general design of the society, and what shall be the business of every member. These things, I say, must be agreed by the members of the society, but all in a constant consistence with the civil laws of the state, and the civil rights and liberties of every subject of it. Note, Wheresoever their original founder hath left them certain rules and directions, it is supposed they all consent to submit to them.

V. Now to apply all this to christianity. The chief and most important things in the christian society were appointed by Christ and his apostles, their first founders, as praying, preaching the gospel, singing, baptism, the Lord's-supper, &c. Other circumstances which were not appointed by the apostles, and which yet were necessary to be determined some one way, these were probably and naturally left to be determined by the common consent and agreement of the church, for their mutual conveniency and general edification; such as the hour of their worship, the place of their meeting, &c. As for other circumstances which were not necessary to be determined one way,

such as their common habits, their gestures, &c. these were generally left indifferent to every worshipper; always provided they acted agreeably to the common light of nature and reason of things, becoming the sacred solemnity of worship, and in a consistence with the interest of the state. I say, it seems most probable that the determination of these things was left to the public agreement of the people, or to their private liberty: But if any persons shall suppose, they were left to be determined by the rulers or officers of the church, I will not by any means debate that matter here: it is enough for my purpose, if it be acknowledged, these things were left to be agreed upon or determined by the church itself either the people, or their officers in that society, and not by their civil governors*.

VI. Yet still let it be remembered that the power of the state or the civil government, is supreme over all these societies and their officers, in all things which relate to the peace and welfare of the nation or the city; and none of them have any right to make any laws, agree upon any rules, or do any thing contrary to the good of the city, or the civil government.

As for instance, if the college of philosophers profess and maintain the opinion of a public community of wives, or of exposing or murdering their children, if the synagogue of the Jews should refuse to give any pledges of their allegiance to heathen governors, if the christians should pretend that civil dominion is founded in divine grace, or that the saints, that is, the christians, should rise and take the city, or that no faith is to be kept with heretics: or if any of these societies should profess and maintain the right of persecuting or punishing any other society for their peculiar sentiments or practices, which affect not the state or the public good, they themselves may lawfully be sent out of the city, and be banished from the protection of the civil government, for these things are contrary to the public welfare. Or if any of the members of any of these societies, should be guilty of crimes that are inconsistent with the peace of mankind or welfare of the state, viz. murder, drunkenness, stealing, cheating, slander, sedition, treason, &c, they may be punished by the state according to the laws of the land, without any consideration what other society they may belong to, or any regard to it.

But I would proceed yet further here, and add, that if any of these societies should presume to punish any of their own members with the loss of life or limb, or seizing their property, or in any manner which is inconsistent with the peace or welfare of the state, these members so punished, or any others for them, may make complaint to the civil rulers, and these civil rulers have a right to restrain these particular societies from inflicting such punishments, and they have a right also to punish those that inflict them according to the laws of the land; for it is their proper business to see that no member of the state be injured in life, liberty or property. Hence it follows, that these particular societies have no right or power to punish those whom their own particular laws only may call criminal, except with such small fines, inconveniences, or dishonours as their offending members willingly submit to, or by sharp reproofs, or by suspending them for a season from their meetings, or casting them utterly out of their society: but they have no power nor right to call in the civil arm to punish them for such sort of faults. Indeed if their crime be such as affects the common welfare of the state, or peace of mankind, they may not only be expelled out of that society in particular, by the members of it, for all such societies should suffer nothing among them contrary to the peace or welfare of the state: But they should also be cited

* I have no concern here in that famous question, whether a christian church must be governed by an episcopal person, or bishop in the way of monarchy, or by a synod of presbyters in a way of aristocracy, or by the vote of the people in a way of democracy; but it is evident, that the civil powers, of what form soever they be, have no just right or authority to govern the church in *things sacred.*

before the civil magistrate, in order to be punished as the laws of the land direct.

And if I were to speak here peculiarly of the christian church, I would say, that it has no power to punish its own officers or members according to scripture, for any crime whatsoever, but one of these three ways, viz. by an admonition or reproof given publicly in the church, by suspension or exclusion from the office they bore therein, or from the communion of the church for a season, or by utter exclusion of them from the church, which is called excommunication: And the civil magistrate may punish the same persons, if their crimes affect the public welfare, with death or imprisonment, or any other civil penalty which the law of the land appoints.

VII. If nothing be found in any of these societies or their members, contrary to the interests of the state or welfare of the people, then they may by their professed allegiance to the state, claim protection of the state; the rulers of the state have no proper power nor authority to hinder them from meeting in their several societies, which were instituted for different purposes, but they are bound to defend them as good subjects. Nor have magistrates any power to determine the greater or the lesser offices, rules, actions, circumstances, or any affairs relating purely to these distinct societies: They have no power to appoint the painters, who should be their president, or when they shall meet, or what sort of pencils, or what colours they shall use; nor have the rulers of the state any right to require the philosophers to change any of their opinions, or to read Plato, or Zeno, or Aristotle, or to alter the course of their lectures; nor can they impose rules on the assembly of deists, when to sit, or stand, or kneel; nor should they command the Jews when they shall wash themselves, or what flesh they shall eat; nor impose upon the christians, who shall be their teachers, or what habits or garments they shall wear, or what gestures they shall use in their preaching or singing, or any other parts of their worship. In these things the state has no power to interpose, where the public welfare of the city or nation receives no danger or damage.

VIII. It is granted indeed, that if the necessity or welfare of any such city or state require that foreign silk shall not be worn, nor any foreign paper be used, in order to encourage a national manufacture, or that no person shall appear without a woollen garment upon them, to promote the breeding of sheep, or that veal shall not be eaten, nor calves be slain for a twelvemonth, in order to maintain a breed of cattle after a great murrain, &c. All these societies ought to submit their particular rules and their personal liberty to these laws of the state, and to comply with them as the state enjoins. But where the affairs, exigencies or benefits of the state do not require such commands or prohibitions, there these private societies and their actions are not to be modelled and determined by the mere humour, or caprice, or arbitrary will of a magistrate.

IX. Perhaps you will say, are not civil magistrates to be obeyed "in omnibus licitis & honestis," that is, "in all things that are lawful and honest?" And if magistrates require several of these particular actions or circumstances of action to be performed according to their will in these several societies, ought not the societies to obey them, provided there is nothing commanded but what is honest and lawful? To this I answer,

X. That I have read of an oath of obedience "in omnibus licitis & honestis," "in all things lawful and honest," required and imposed by ecclesiastical superiors, whether justly or no, I say not: but I never knew that this was the just limitation of obedience due to civil powers: For since the authority of the civil power reaches only to the common welfare and safety of the state and people, the sworn obedience of subjects can be required only in things that relate to the welfare of the people and the state. I never heard that those famous words loyalty and allegiance which are so often used in our nation, signified any more than our obligation and our readiness to obey the

supreme power in things of a civil nature, required by the laws of the land. Now the laws are all made, or are supposed to be made, for the good of the people and the safety of the state. Note, in this safety of the state is also included the honour due to the rulers, for if due honour be not paid to the ruling powers, it endangers the safety of the state.

XI. Let it be further considered also, that in the original compact between the government and the governed, the governed do not consent to part with any liberties of human nature, but only so far as is necessary for civil government and their common protection, security and peace. They are bound therefore to obey, not "in omnibus licitis & honestis, but "in omnibus quæ ad reipublicæ salutem." Can we suppose that when the people swear allegiance to governors, they mean to give them power over all their private and domestic affairs and actions, or the circumstances of them, over their conduct in labour or study, in trade or recreations, and left themselves or their families no liberty of going out or in, when they pleased, or wearing short coats or long, red or blue, of eating bread or flesh or herbs as they thought proper, or dining or supping at a round table or a square one, upon a dish of turnips or a haunch of venison? And if the people never gave up their liberties in these affairs to the rulers of the state, then the rulers never had a right to claim such obedience: And if they have no right to determine such sort of things, in natural and private life, in families, or in any voluntary societies, I know not what divine or human reason they can have to claim this right in religious societies or in churches: Surely they can have no such pretence, except where the people or the laws have given them such a claim; and after all, whether such laws are good and just may deserve a debate.

XII. Let the christian church in Corinth therefore be esteemed but as one of the rest of these human voluntary societies, and it may subsist well enough in a heathen state, if the governors do but merely protect their faithful subjects, and do not stretch their authority into the affairs or religion, which is beyond its proper extent. Gallio, the deputy of Achaia, had some good notion of this matter in St. Paul's time, when he would take no cognisance *of words and names and questions* about the Jewish religion, but only about matters of civil *wrong or wicked lewdness:* But he was much to blame, even according to his own principles, that he did not keep the public peace, and protect Sosthenes from the mob, "whether he were a Jew or a heathen, or a christian;" Acts xviii. 12—17. For this was the proper province of a magistrate to interpose in matters of civil wrong or injury.

All that the christian church or any other peaceable society can claim from the state, is protection; and this protection is sufficient to guard them from all disturbance of their peace by men of violence, or harlequins and scaramouches, or any other intruder into their assemblies, chairs or pulpits, besides those whom the society appoints: For if such complaints be made by the society to the magistrate, he has a right to restrain by prison or proper penalties, such invaders of the public peace, as trespass upon the innocent employment, the ground, possessions and properties of their neighbours; and he is bound to do it as a guardian of the public peace: Nor should any pretence of conscience screen the offender in such cases; nor can the magistrate fulfil his duty without securing an impartial liberty, safety and protection to every loyal assembly, whether it be appointed for music or painting, philosophy or worship.

It should also be added here, that if any persons who are secluded or cast out from these societies, by the rules and vote of the society, will yet obstinately enter in upon their ground, and mix with them in their common acts of instruction, practice, worship, &c. so as to give society any disturbance; it is the business and duty of the civil magistrate, upon proper application made, to guard every innocent society of loyal subjects from such inroads, injuries, *and disturbances*; and that even in their festivals and recreations, as well as

their solemnities or common employments. Thus far shall suffice to shew the right of a christian church, to be secured from injuries and impositions in common with any other innocent and voluntary societies.

XIII. Now let it be supposed, that some of the civil governors of Corinth, should join themselves to any of these societies, whether philosophers, antiquaries, painters, deists, or christians, would there be any sufficient reason why they should be turned out of their posts in the government, because they are become christians, or become antiquaries or philosophers, &c. supposing still that they fulfil the offices of their magistracy with honour? And much less reason is there, why there should be a law made to seclude them from their civil offices, and lay a public brand or infamy upon them, because they join themselves to particular societies which do not in the least interfere with civil government: Supposing always that in these societies, there is nothing dishonourable or scandalous, which would vilify and debase the dignity of a ruler, and evidently endanger the welfare of the state.

XIV. Yet no ruler in the Corinthian state, who joins himself to any of these particular societies, has any authority or power to alter the special laws of that society, or to prescribe new rules or practices to it: For he is taken into the society but as a single member, and has but his single vote, and consequently has no further right nor authority to introduce any one rule or mode, form or ceremony into the college of philosophers, the society of painters, or the christian church. All the civil power which he carries with him, reaches no further than to see that nothing be done in any of these societies inconsistent with the good of the state.

XV. When a chief civil ruler becomes a member of any of these societies, he gains thereby an opportunity of knowing thoroughly all the affairs of the society, and of observing whether there can be any special benefit, damage or danger to the state, arising from all the opinions and practices thereof. So far it may be beneficial to the state. And it is certain, this civil ruler may be beneficial to the particular society of which he is a member, if he be rich or great, by procuring for them, or bestowing upon them halls for lectures, mansions for the professors, or chapels for their christian worship, schools for philosophical experiments or painting, exercises, &c. and perhaps he may procure civil immunities and advantages for them, that is, such as add no tax or burden, or inconvenience to the state: And he may favour the christian church or the Jewish synagogue if he pleases, so far as to appoint no civil or military duties at the same hours, which would interfere with christian or Jewish worship in the city of Corinth.

XVI. Thus there are some advantages which may accrue to the state, and some to the church, whereof the chief magistrates are members, and that without any such alliance between church and state, as some have supposed necessary for the security of both. But if the advances in temporal things, which the church receives from the state, be not well guarded and limited, the church will grow more earthly, but the state will not grow more holy or heavenly: The church will be in danger of losing its humility, piety, and purity, and the state will run a great hazard of being made mere servants or slaves to the church. Frequent and long experience has taught the world this sad truth. Again,

XVII. Let us make a further supposition that both the people and the rulers should be so much in love with the sentiments and practices of the philosophers, the antiquaries, the deists, or the christians, as that the bulk of them should become members of their colleges, societies, or churches: Still the civil power would reach no further than the welfare of the state of Corinth. The churches and other societies must still determine for themselves the rules and circumstances of actions that relate to the design of their assembly, whether the rulers of the state vote for it or no; and every society may make such laws for itself and its own mem-

bers as it pleases, in things wherein the good or hurt of the state have no concern.

XVII. Here I know it will be objected, that this is setting up "a dominion within a dominion," or "imperium in imperio," which politicians have usually thought dangerous. But I think it may be sufficiently replied in answer to this difficulty,

Reply, That if every such society keep itself within its own bounds, and meddle with nothing relating to the state; and if the civil magistrate has the supreme power and dominion even over all these societies, so far as to secure what relates to the civil welfare, the peace of mankind, and the safety of government, there can be no inconvenience or danger in giving a full and complete toleration, protection and liberty to any such societies. What detriment can any civil government be exposed to by a master ruling his own family, by his own private laws, or by a tutor or president of a college, who governs his own academy and students by appointed rules of his own, still supposing they meddle not with state-affairs, nor obstruct the public peace or government, but conform to the laws of the state.

XIX. And if the forms of government in the city of Corinth, should change from aristocracy to monarchy or democracy, or if it mould itself into any other form, still these societies of christians and philosophers, deists, antiquaries, or painters might be safe in the enjoyment of their proper liberties, and the state suffer not the least inconvenience by them.

XX. Perhaps it will be enquired here, if the bulk of the people of a nation together with their rulers embrace the christian faith, may they not be esteemed as a christian state, and may not the whole nation, be considered both as members of the civil state and of the christian church, and be governed by christian rulers, as officers both of the church and state, and be ruled promiscuously by their laws and sanctions of rewards and penalties both in things sacred and civil? And may it not be maintained as a mixed government or establishment of church and state without any great distinction between them. I answer,

XXI. Answer I. First. when things of so very different a nature are mixed and blended together, it is most likely it will bring a medley of confusions into both: When we unite and mingle ideas so distinct as civil government and religion, as the laws and rights of God and of Cæsar, as persons and ordinances temporal and spiritual as powers sacred and human, as the concerns of the soul and the body, as the things of this world and the things of the world to come, it will be exceeding hard to reason and judge aright concerning the conduct proper to both, or to either of them, and it will be almost impossible to determine and maintain their just limits and boundaries: It will introduce such a perplexity of things, as will scarce allow sufficient grounds to judge, when or how far, one incroaches on the other, and to correct any mistakes, irregularities or unhappy consequences, which may be derived and grow from this unnatural mixture. In the second place therefore,

XXII. Answer II. Since we cannot so well reason and determin[illegible] upon things when in such a confusion, let us reflect what hath been the re[illegible] effect where such sort of mixtures have been practised. Thus it has been [illegible] old, when Roman Emperors lent the bishops their secular power, and th[illegible] bishops gave them a right to call synods, to preside in them, to determin[illegible] affairs in the church.

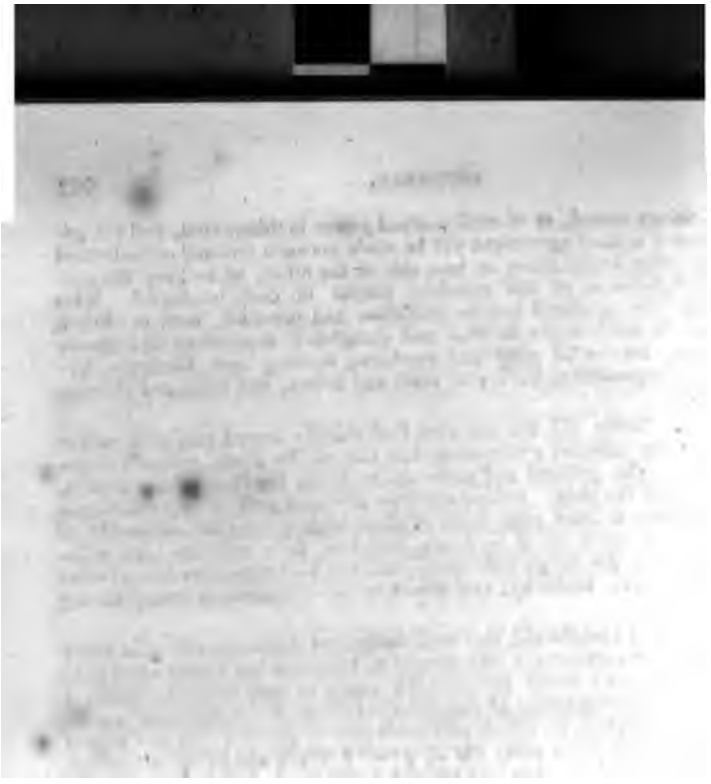
Thus it has been done in many of the popish states and kingdom[illegible] where bishops have been the chief rulers in the state: But if we enquire [illegible] our ancestors in this nation when it was all subject to popery, or if we surv[illegible] the popish nations of Europe, and observe their mixture of civil and sac[illegible] powers, what can we find derived from it but frequent usurpation of c[illegible]

power in things sacred, or of ecclesiastical power in things civil, and yet generally such a mutual agreement will be made between civil and ecclesiastical rulers, by some superiorities on one side or the other, as to keep the persons and consciences of the common people in deep bondage? This odd mixture has produced infinite confusion and mischief, both in church and state; it has brought in wars and slaughters, inquisitions and bloody persecutions, loss of all piety and goodness, burning zeal, blindness, hypocrisy and superstition, slavery of souls and bodies, and fraud and violence without end.

XXIII. Never did the all-wise God mingle sacred and civil power throughout any national government but that of the Jews, where he himself was both the political and ecclesiastical head, the God of the church, and the king of the state. Scarce are these mixtures safe in any other hand but his. When in later ages some of their high priests the successors of the Maccabees, grew up to be kings, and God their supreme king withdrew from them his divine influences, and his kind superintendency, what terrible confusion, barbarity, and madness were sometimes found among them?

XXIV. And I might add, that such dangerous mixtures as these in every popish state or government, where there is no toleration nor liberty allowed to other christians, who would maintain the purity of their religion; these, I say, are the very composition of the *feet and toes of Nebuchadnezzar's great image in Daniel*, chap. ii. *which were made part of potter's clay and part of iron**: These may try to mix, but they will not well cleave to one another. And if the dream of the Assyrian king be divine, or the interpretation of the Jewish prophet be true, these "toes and these feet, wherein *the iron is mixed with miry clay*, wait only for the *stone cut out of the mountain without hands, to smite the huge image upon its feet and to break it to pieces.*" Then the four vast monarchies of this world meet their last period, *and become like the chaff of a threshing-floor, and the wind carries them away:* Then shall that stone grow and *fill the whole earth, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdom of the Lord and his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever;* Rev. xi. 15. *Amen.*

* Lowth in his Commentary on Daniel seems to approve entirely this exposition, for he gives no other sense of the words, verse 42. And if this were a proper place for explaining the prophecies of Daniel or the visions of St. John, chapters xiii. and xvii. I think it might be made to appear beyond all reasonable opposition, that the first head of the Roman empire was only civil, and strong as iron, like the legs of Nebuchadnezzar's image: The last was part civil and part ecclesiastical; such were the feet and ten toes of this image, or the popedom with its ten kingdoms, mingled of iron and clay, which await this final destruction.



THE

RUIN AND RECOVERY

OF

MANKIND,

&c. &c.

PREFACE.

TO "THE RUIN AND RECOVERY OF MANKIND."

IDST the darkness of our degenerate state, God has been pleased to ı us with two springs of light, to lead us into the knowledge of our own , and to direct us in the way to his favour and our happiness. These ll known by the names of reason and revelation, that is, the reason of ıd the revelation of God.

ight reason is ever uniform and consistent with itself, and is the same ges. It was given to man at first, to teach him all that we call natural n; and even now, in its diminished glory, it gives sufficient evidence of n, and assures us feelingly of our universal degeneracy, our lost inno- and peace: It affords us also many hints of the favourable condescen- f divine mercy, the necessity of our repentance of sin, and our trust in grace, in order to our recovery.

is granted that the dictates of reason amongst the various tribes and tions of fallen mankind, have been mingled with a thousand prejudices, esses and wanderings, with the mistakes of fancy, and the follies of tition; and at best it has not been found of itself practically sufficient ruct us in all things that relate to our salvation: Yet still, reason is a iven us by God himself, and it has very much to do in our direction our present duty and our final felicity. But since our reason is so ve, both in its discovery of our ruin and our restoration, God has been l to teach iu a more immediate manner by the light of revelation, ıs given to mankind early discoveries of his mind and will before scrip- as written, and then by Moses and other holy writers, he has furnished with knowledge of their original apostacy from God, their guilt and ıedness; and he has been ever since leading them onwards by different ɔr degrees towards the full discovery of his will and their salvation ıus Christ, the Mediator.

nd since the revelations of God to men, have been so very early and s, and have been delivered to us by different persons, and in different there may be some difficulties arising from this variety: There may be ıeeming inconsistencies between the several parts of it, and some sup- ɔppositions to the light of reason: Yet it is certain that the two only which God has favoured us with in order to learn his will and our duty, ver contradict themselves, nor each other. There is not any one part ne revelation which is really inconsistent with reason, or with any other ɔf revelation itself. There is certainly a glorious connexion and divine ny between them all, and all join together to make up one complete e, gradually advancing to perfection, and terminating and centering at our full recovery to the favour and image of God by the promised ıh or Saviour. Now as the revelation of God in an illustrious manner ɛs the deficiencies of our reason, and enlightens our natural darkness knowledge of divine things, so the exercise of our reasoning powers ' necessary to assist us not only in the understanding of the several ɔf revelation, but in reconciling them to each other as well as to the ɛs of right reason. It is our reason which shews us this blessed harmony.

f it should be found, that in my sentiments on this subject I have fol- no human *scheme, no established* system, no hypothesis of any con- *r party, let it be known* that my studies have been more engaged in

meditation, than in reading controversies; reason and the bible were the only springs whence I derived my sentiments, and the only tests by which I tried them, and not the authority of any great name, or any sect or party among men. Therefore if any reader is determined already to believe nothing but what is perfectly conformable to some favourite system, or the opinions of the party, which he has chosen for his test of truth and error, I shall not court his favour, nor be greatly moved by his censure.

But if I have been so happy as to set these truths, which scripture has revealed concerning our misery and divine mercy, in so favourable a light, as to make it evident to well-disposed impartial readers, how far they are supported by reason itself, and to discover and maintain this agreement between these two different manifestations of God to men, I have attained my end: If I have been enabled in any measure to render these sacred truths more credible to the sincere enquirers after truth, and to relieve the divine revelations of scripture, against the cavils of an age which greatly pretends to reason, I shall account my labour well employed.

The deist will have no longer cause to triumph in the assurance of his attacks against scripture, nor shall the christian want matter for his satisfaction and joy, when he sees his divine religion vindicated by the powers of reason.

My chief design, and that which has regulated all my meditations and reasonings, is to establish and confirm what appears to me to be plain matter of fact, in the sinful and miserable circumstances of all the children of Adam by nature, and their hopes of recovery by divine grace, so far as either the light of nature or scripture would assist me, and to vindicate the moral perfections of God, his holiness, justice, and goodness in his works of providence and grace, or in his whole government of the world. The ground-work of my scheme is laid in the original rectitude of man, and his early degeneracy into sin and misery; and I have drawn from the mere light of nature, sufficient proof and evidence of both these.

If what has been said in answer to the first question, does not sufficiently prove the doctrine of original sin from the universal sinfulness and misery of mankind, I hope the first essay in the appendix will do it; the first part whereof represents that subject more largely, as it relates to the misery of man, and the latter end of it briefly enforces the argument from his universal sinfulness, both by reason and scripture. The reader is desired to forgive the repetition of a few sentiments which are set in various lights, especially considering that this essay was first designed only for a philosophical enquiry or amusement, and not to take its place in this book.

It would have been needless labour to enter into any examination of the learned Doctor Whitby's scheme published in his writings, and to answer all his objections about original sin, imputed or inherent: For if the facts which I recite concerning the sinful nature and wretched circumstances of mankind even from their infancy are found by constant experience and observation to be true, then a great part of his scheme vanishes and dies as a matter of mere mistake in fact: And if my scheme or hypothesis for the solution of the difficulties which attend this doctrine, is supported by reason and scripture, then his objections against it must fall of course. No objection against a certain truth can ever be valid or strong, though at first view it may appear ever so plausible. And I thought this to be the plainest and shortest way of writing and reasoning, and not to embarrass my readers more than was necessary with the perplexities of controversial writings on so difficult a subject*.

Besides all this I add, that though a considerable part of that writer's objections against original sin may lie heavy on some defenders of it, yet those

* Yet I must confess in the second edition of this book, I have found this intermixture of objections and answers more necessary than I imagined; and that merely to keep errors from triumph, and honest readers from mistakes.

difficulties are utterly precluded by the hypothesis which I have proposed in the last question. What that very learned author has drawn out of the fathers with much labour and criticism, let it fall on either side of the controversy, will have but small force to move any man who considers these two things:

1. How little we can suppose to learn of the certain doctrines of Christ and his apostles, with any exactness and accuracy from the mere traditions of persons who lived for the most part a hundred and fifty, two hundred, to three hundred years after them? For we have the original sacred writings as well as they; the rest is all but tradition and uncertainty.

2. When he considers that the early fathers, who wrote before these controversies arose and were debated in the church, represented their sentiments on these subjects in very loose and indeterminate language, as Doctor Whitby himself will easily allow, and they were indeed hardly consistent with themselves, or with one another, in this as well as in many other points of opinion or doctrine. This uncertainty of their sense is the spring of many debates between Doctor Whitby and Gerard Vossius.

I know some opinions will be found here, which are supposed to be borrowed from the common schemes of orthodox writers, but let them not be at once renounced with contempt and disdain*, by any age which is fond of novelty and reasoning. Perhaps there may be some reasonings here brought to support them, which have not been set in a clear and full light by former writers; and notwithstanding their old-fashioned appearances, these may be found to be divine truths.

If the reader shall meet with any new thoughts here, let not the book be at once rejected on that account: This preface entreats the author may be forgiven, who has entered into an untrodden path sometimes, not willingly, but he has been constrained to it, in order to solve such difficulties as we have never yet seen relieved to the general satisfaction of men, by all the usual and common tracks of argument. "Every scribe who is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, should bring forth out of his treasure things new and old;" Mat. xiii. 52.

If every person who is pleased to peruse these leaves, pays but the same high veneration to what scripture has revealed, has the same just regards to the plain dictates of right reason, the same deep sense of the difficulties which attend these enquiries, and such a constant zeal to abolish the controversies of christianity, and to reconcile contending christians, as the writer desires to have; I persuade myself there will not be many rash and sudden or severe censures pronounced upon the arguments here used, though they may not happen to convince the reader: Nor will there be many angry adversaries, or many disdainful opposers of the reconciling sentiments of this book, whether they may carry in them the appearance of being old or new.

Neither novelty nor antiquity of opinion can make any certain pretences to truth, nor can they be esteemed just prejudices against it: As there are many divine truths which have been known and acknowledged from all antiquity, so I am persuaded there are some others which have never been seen in their full force and perspicuity since the days of our Saviour and the apostles; there are some sacred verities which have had much darkness diffused

* It is too frequent a custom of many readers to applaud or censure a book very highly, according to the opinion it favours, not according to the reason or argument it produces. If the opinion be agreeable to the sentiments and language of any particular party, which the reader has chosen, the arguments, though ever so common or trifling, are pronounced strong and cogent. On the other hand, if the opinion happen to be near a-kin to those of a contrary sect, "then the arguments brought to support it are all trifling: The author is a heretic, and therefore his reasonings must needs be all weak and insufficient, if not dangerous and destructive." May divine providence deliver all that I write *on deep and difficult subjects from* the hand of such readers, till they are *become more sincere and impartial* in the search of truth!

around them by early corruptions of the faith, and by the controversies succeeding ages; and these stand in need of some further light to dissip that darkness, and restore them to their primitive perspicuity. Whether a of my attempts or labours here shall be successful for this end, must be trusted with the judgment of the reader, and the providence of God.

And now I have proposed these thoughts to the world in hope to clear some difficulties in our holy religion, and to shew how far our own rea may support what scripture reveals: I leave all with the public, and shall be solicitous to support all these sentiments, or to vindicate these propos If any person can derive any degree of light toward his satisfaction from th papers, I shall rejoice with him. Let every one chuse what he likes, a neglect the rest. I will not persuade any man to be of my opinion till he s reason for it; and whensoever I see reason, I shall change them mys Our best-concerted schemes have their imperfections, and therefore I d not assume certainty in matters of doubtful disputation: Nor do I assert affirm several things which I have here written; for I know myself a we fallible creature, and it is no wonder if I should fall into mistakes.

I should be glad to see a safer and more consistent scheme on th subjects proposed to the world, which may rectify all the errors of this bo with convincing evidence, and scatter our darknesses like a rising sun. cavil at particular thoughts or phrases is much easier than to form a perf hypothesis. But it is the prerogative of the great God only to pierce throu all his own infinite schemes with an unerring eye, to surround them with all-comprehensive view, to grasp them all in one single survey, and to spre a reconciling light over all their immense varieties. Man must yet grap with difficulties in this dusky twilight; but God in his time will irradiate t earth more plentifully with his light and truth; then darkness and conte tions shall fly away for ever. Hasten, O Lord the happy day. Amen.

ADVERTISEMENT

CONCERNING THE SECOND EDITION.

ittle pains that I have taken to review this book since it was printed, many years before: I have read also what has been published in to it, and I would ever keep my mind in such a temper, as is ready the truth from every quarter, and learn my mistakes in order to m.

am not yet convinced of any errors in the general doctrines here l; nor does my heart tell me, that my representation of the tate of mankind in its present degenerate circumstances exceeds It is by no means true, which some have imagined, that a retire- the world, and dwelling much among my own solitary thoughts thers, have led me into these melancholy and dismal apprehensions d: But it is my free and public converse with the world in my more sprightly parts of life, have given me these just and dis- ews of all the race of Adam. Daily observation in riper years to assure, that there is much more folly, sin, and misery among I have described: Hereby my proof and evidence of some original al degeneracy of the creature grows brighter and stronger, since hiefs could not arise merely from the immediate hand of God, as a nd merciful Creator.

scriptural doctrine of original sin has engaged my pen, because, in n, it has a most extensive and powerful influence on several parts l godliness; I think a deep sense of it lays the best foundation of sion to those blessed doctrines of grace, which make up so great a gospel of Christ. It is this article which humbles and abases the an, and brings him to disclaim all self-sufficiency, and to lie at the d. It is this makes him poor in spirit, and renders him constantly nt and supplicant for divine grace. This leads him out of himself or righteousness, wisdom, and strength, as well as excites him to vent gratitude for every blessing of soul and body. It is this doc- powerfully forbids those vicious passions of self-admiration, and ur neighbour, and as strongly inclines us to christian compassion. our hearts to pity and relieve each other in the various distresses of spirit, since we are all by nature under the same condemnation r.

soever I see this doctrine of original sin rejected and renounced, fficient reason from many observations, to expect the glories of the l in the same proportion be depreciated, neglected and despised: all born still in our original state of nature and innocency, the grace and salvation of Christ Jesus does not seem so very neces- s; if it was but a little bruise we suffered by the fall of Adam, a may heal us. Nor shall I wonder to see any man by degrees run nto deism, who scornfully abandons this truth. I confess I take e to be of such eminent importance in our holy profession, as our solicitous regards; though a late author, with whom I have , calls it, "one of the greatest absurdities in all the system of ligion."

I wish with all my soul that no christian controversy might ever give occasion for such excuses on either side.

For my part, I pray for the blessing which this author supposes we have always enjoyed; I wish heartily that original sin may be demolished in us and have no more existence: But so long as this real and dreadful malady continues to rage through the world, and goes on to destroy mankind multitudes, I hope in every age some wise and happy pens will arise to declare the painful truth, and convince the world of this article, which reason, scripture, and universal experience join to support. If all sense of our native sin and wretchedness be banished from among men, the rising age may be tempted to neglect the only sovereign remedy for the grace of Christ, the second Adam, upon a mistaken presumption, that our natures have received no infection from the first.

THE

RUIN AND RECOVERY OF MANKIND, &c.

INTRODUCTION.—*God made man upright.*

MAN is a creature made up of two distinct ingredients, an animal body and a rational mind, so united as to act in a mutual correspondence according to certain laws and conditions appointed by his Creator. Now suppose the great and blessed God, who is perfect in wisdom and power, in justice and goodness, were to form such a new creature as man is, and any of us should sit down and consider according to the best exercise of our reason, what qualifications would be due to this new-made creature, as proceeding from a being of such wisdom, justice and goodness, we should probably trace out these several particulars:

I. We reasonably suppose he must have *a perfection of natural powers, both of body and spirit*, considered as in a state of union, and suited to his present circumstances. Not that we have any reason to suppose man should be made so perfect a being as God could make him; for the wisdom of God plainly designed to display its unbounded varieties of contrivance in different ranks and orders of his creation: And besides, we cannot reasonably imagine this creature man should be made with such sublime perfections at first, as he himself might afterwards arrive at by a wise improvement of his powers: For God would not preclude either the diligence or the pleasure of his intelligent creature, from advancing itself to superior excellencies. But still that creature which was designed to bear his Maker's nearest likeness and authority in this lower world, must have powers perfectly sufficient for his present well being and acting in that station wherein God his Creator placed him.

It has been indeed the vain fancy of some writers, that the eye of man in his first creation was so acute and penetrating, that it could discover those distant stars and planets of heaven, or those minute atoms in the contexture of earthly bodies round about us, which are now only to be seen by the help of optic glasses: And they have been so weak as to imagine that his ear could take in the most distant and feeblest sounds, and was equal in its own original powers, to the advantages which we now receive from speaking and hearing trumpets: And that his feeling and his smelling had such proportionable superiorities in his state of innocence beyond all that we now experience. But it

has been sufficiently made evident, that animal powers exalted to this degree would have been a burden, and a perpetual inconvenience to us in the present state; they would have been calamities instead of comforts, and as an ingenious author says, a man endued with such exquisite senses

> Would be "so tremblingly alive all o'er,
> To smart and agonize at every pore;
> Or, quick effluvia darting through his brain,
> Die of a rose in aromatic pain.
> Nature would thunder in his opening ears,
> And stun him with the music of the spheres."——Pope.

But all the senses of this creature, though not so exquisitely fine, yet they must be clear and strong, his limbs vigorous and active, his body healthy in all the inward and outward parts of it, and every natural power in its proper order. Surely God would form such a creature in a state of perfect ease, without any original malady of nature to give him pain or sorrow. I cannot think there would be any natural tendency in his animal body to pains, diseases, or death, while he remained innocent and without sin or blame. And if there was any such thing as pain admitted into his first constitution, his pleasures must at least be equal to his pains, and his advantages also equal to his dangers: The very justice of God the Creator seems to require this.

I add further, that if we consider the goodness of God, surely we must say the pleasure of his innocent creature should be superior to a state of mere ease or balance to his pains, and his advantages should be superior to his dangers: Divine goodness seems to require this, as antecedent in nature to any state of trial. And as the powers of his body must be perfect in these respects, so the faculties of his soul must have their perfection too. His mind or understanding must have all that knowledge both of God and creatures which was needful for his happiness. Not that we suppose God should give his creature man, when he first formed him, all manner of knowledge in arts and sciences, in philosophy and divinity; but he must know at his first creation, what was necessary for his present peace and welfare; his reason must be clear, and his judgment uncorrupted, his conscience upright and sensible, and his mind furnished with all necessary truths.

This leads me to speak also of his moral perfection. A rational creature thus made, must be not only innocent as a tree or a brute is, but must be formed holy; that is, he must have a principle of holiness concreated with him: His will must have an inward bias and propensity to holiness and virtue; he must have an inward inclination to please and honour that God who made him, a supreme love to his Creator, and a zeal and desire to serve him, a holy fear of offending him, with a readiness to do

all his will. In short, either the new created man loved God supremely, or not: If he did not, he was not innocent, since the law and light of nature requires such a supreme love to God. If he did love God supremely, then he stood disposed and ready for every act of adoration and obedience; and this is true holiness of heart. And, indeed, without this how could a God of holiness love the work of his own hands?

There must also in this creature be found a regular subjection of the inferior powers to the superior; sense and appetite and passion must be subject to reason, that is, the mind and conscience must have a power and readiness to govern these lower faculties, and keep them in due obedience, that he might not offend against the law of his creation, and his will must be inclined to it*. He must also have his heart inlaid with love and good-will to the creatures, and especially those of his own species, if he should be placed among them; and he must be endued with a principle of honesty and truth in dealing with them. And if many of these creatures were made at once, there should be no domineering pride, no malice, no envy, no falsehood, no brawls or contentions among them; but all harmony and love, each seeking the welfare and happiness of his fellow-creatures as well as his own.

This principle of universal righteousness and holiness, I take to be the noblest part of that *image of God*, that is, his moral image, in which Moses the Jewish historian represents man to be at first created, and which I think was due to his nature from a God of equity and goodness. And the same writer assures us, when *God surveyed all his works, at the end of his creation, he pronounced them all very good.* And Solomon the wisest of men, in his book of Ecclesiastes, assures us, *that God made man upright;* Eccl. vii. 29. It is granted that the natural image of God in which man was created, consisted partly in his spiritual, intelligent and immortal nature, and the various faculties thereof; and his political image, if I may so express it, consisted in his being made lord and governor over all the lower creation: But when we speak of this part of the divine image which is moral, we are assured by Paul, that it was the rectitude of his nature, or his conformity to the will and law of God. Paul was once a Jewish pharisee, and well understood the sense of Moses, and in his epistle to the Ephesians, iv. 24. he says, that *the image of God, into which man is to be*

* Surely if the soul or will of this new made creature had not a real propensity to love and obey *God* who *is a spirit*, but was merely formed with a natural capacity or power to do so, in a state of indifference to good or evil; then his being put into such a union with flesh and blood among a thousand animal temptations, would have been an over balance on the side of sensuality and vice: But our reason can never suppose that God the wise, just and good, would have placed a new made creature in such an original situation.

renewed, and consequently in which he was first made, consists *in righteousness and true holiness*, as well as in knowledge; Col. iii. 10*.

II. From the justice and goodness of God, we may also reasonably infer, that though man might be made with a perfect freedom of will, and with a power to chuse evil as well as good, that he might be put into a state of probation; yet it seems necessary that he should not only have a superior propensity to what was good wrought at first into his nature, but he must also have *a full sufficiency of power to preserve himself in this state of obedience and love to his Creator*, and to guard himself from every temptation and sin, if his faculties were rightly employed. He must therefore have a sufficient knowledge of God and himself and his duty, so far as was necessary to practise it: He must have his Maker's *law written in his heart*, that is, he must have such light of reason and conscience as, if carefully employed, would always lead him to judge aright concerning his duty; and he must have a ready and proximate ability to practise and fulfil it. Surely he must be furnished with powers of self-preservation in his state of innocency, and sufficient to guard him from offending his Creator, and losing his happiness. This the justice and the goodness of God seem to require. His natural powers in themselves must have a full sufficiency for his own security from sin, if he used those natural powers in the best manner he was capable of; otherwise he would be exposed to unavoidable sin and misery, and certainly fall into it, if he were not able to preserve his innocence and virtue: He would as it were be made for his Maker's anger, if he were not able to preserve himself in his love.

III. It is highly probable from the goodness of God, that such a creature would be made immortal, that is, he would have had no principles of decay or death in him. It is true, the great God, considered merely as an absolute Lord and sovereign of his creatures, might take away all that he had given him at pleasure; but it is hardly to be supposed, that if his creature stood obedient to all his Maker's will, his wisdom and goodness would have destroyed an intelligent creature who had continued to serve and please him. Whatsoever had been done to his body, yet still we would suppose, God would not divest his soul of his natural immortality, but rather have advanced it to some better vehicle, or dwelling-place in some upper world. It is likely

* Notwithstanding all the cavils which have been raised against these words, yet if these two texts are considered together, their most obvious meaning and the plainest sense of them abides still confirmed, and will strike an honest and unbiassed reader. *The new man*, or the principle of true religion in the heart, is created by God after his moral image, wherein he created man at first, that is, with a holy temper of mind and disposition, to the ready practice of all *righteousness* as fast as occasions and opportunities arise.

also that God would *have endowed his soul with powers to arrive at higher degrees of excellency and happiness*, than those in which he was at first formed: And hereby there was great encouragement given both to his watchfulness against every danger of sinning against God, and hurting himself, as well as to his zeal and diligence both in improving his natural powers, and in performing eminent services for his Maker and converse with him. This would be the way for him to improve in the likeness, and in the love of that almighty Being who made him, as well as more firmly to secure his own immortality and happiness.

IV. I think we may be able to add also, that the habitation, in which a God of infinite goodness would place such a holy and innocent creature, *should be a very beautiful and magnificent building, furnished with all manner of necessaries, and conveniences of life, and prepared not only for his safety and support, but also for his delight*. Our reason seems to say this: And Moses writing concerning the first created pair of mankind, tells us, that when they were brought into this world they were placed in *Eden*, or a garden of pleasure, and had a right given them to all the excellent fruits and delights of such a garden, and were made lords of all the creatures round about them, both in the vegetative and animal world. And as the dwelling of such an innocent and holy creature should be delightful and convenient, so neither should there be any thing noxious or destructive found in this habitation, but what this excellent creature man should have sufficient notice of, and should be endowed with sufficient power to oppose it, or to avoid it. Or if we should suppose that this creature was placed in such a state of trial by his Maker, as that he should be capable of receiving some unavoidable injuries from any noxious thing that was near him, it seems reasonable that he should have a proximate and immediate ability, by the right use of his understanding and his will, and his other powers, to relieve himself, and to turn every such injury to his own superior advantage, and to balance every pain by equal or superior pleasure.

V. And if this creature had power to propagate its own kind, the child should be innocent and holy, and capable of maintaining its duty and happiness as well as the parent. Now if these are the qualifications with which such a new made creature should be endued, and these the circumstances in which our reason would judge from the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God that he ought to be situated; then by a careful survey of what mankind now is, and a comparison thereof with what reason would tell us he ought to be, we may be able to arrive at some determination, whether mankind is at present such a creature as the great and blessed God made him at first: Which is the subject of the ensuing enquiry.

QUEST. I.—*Is Man in his present Circumstances such a Creature as he came out of the hands of God his Creator? Or, is he depraved and ruined by some Universal Degeneracy of his Nature?*

I hope we may derive some evident and complete answer to this enquiry from the following considerations:

I. This earth, which was designed for the habitation of man, carries with it some evident tokens of ruin and desolation, and does not seem to be ordained, in its present form and circumstances, for the habitation of innocent beings; but is more apparently fitted for the dwelling place of creatures who are degenerate and fallen from God. It is granted, that the beauty and order of this lower world, even in its present constitution, and the wonderful texture, composition and harmony of the several parts of it, both in air, earth and sea, are most happily suited to the various purposes of that almighty Being who made it: They give a constant and illustrious display of the power, wisdom and goodness of their Creator. Yet it must be confessed also, there are some glaring and uncontested proofs of the terrors of his justice, and the executions of his vengeance both past and future. Is not the form or shape of our earth, in the present divisions and boundaries of seas and shores, continents and islands, very rude and irregular, abrupt and horrid? Does it look like the regular and beautiful product of a God of wisdom and order? Survey a map of the world, and say, does the form of it strike our eyes with any natural beauty or harmony? Has it the appearance of a lovely and well adjusted piece of workmanship? Or rather, does it not bear strongly on our sight the ideas of ruin and confusion? Travel over the countries of this globe, or visit some of the wilder parts of our own British islands, and make just remarks on them all. What various appearances of a ruined world? What vast broken mountains hang frightfully over the heads of travellers? What stupendous cliffs and promontories rise high and hideous to behold? What dreadful precipices, which make our nature giddy to look down, and are ready to betray our feet into downfals and destructions? What immense extents of waste and barren ground in some countries? What hideous and unpassable deserts? What broad and faithless morasses, which are made at once both deaths and graves to travellers who venture upon them? What huge ruinous caverns of frightful aspect, deep and wide, big enough to bury whole cities?

Notwithstanding all these appearances of ruin and desolation on this earth, yet it is granted, that the great God may have made use of these ragged cliffs and promontories, these dismal caverns, deserts and morasses, &c. to serve various purposes of his providence for the good of mankind, while they dwell here, as well as sometimes for their punishment. His

wisdom can bring good out of evil, and extract conveniences and comforts out of the most hideous and desolate aspect of things. And thus his wisdom and goodness are glorified in the midst of these formidable scenes. And there remain still sufficient evidences of the perfections and glory of the Creator in this earth, notwithstanding the many appearances of judgment and ruin which are found here, as in Rom. i. 20.

But let us proceed into this melancholy spectacle. What resistless deluges of water in a season of great rains come rolling down the hills, bear down all things in their course, and threaten spacious desolation? What roaring and tremendous water-falls in some parts of the globe? What burning mountains, in whose caverns are lakes of glowing metal, or of liquid fire, ready to overflow and burst upon the lower lands; or their bowels are consumed within; and they are turned into a mere shell of earth, covering prodigious cavities of smoke, and furnaces of flame? And they seem to wait only for a divine command to break inward, and bury towns and provinces in fiery ruin. What unknown and active treasures of air or wind, are pent up in the bowels of the earth by the rarefractions produced from subterraneous ferments and fires, all prepared to break out into wide and surprising mischief? What huge torrents of water rush and roar through the hollows of the globe we tread? What dreadful sounds and threatening appearances from the region of meteors in the air? What clouds charged with flame and thunder, which are ready to burst on the earth, and discompose and terrify all nature for many miles round, and to make dreadful havoc of mankind?

When I seriously take a survey of some such scenes as these, I am very ready to say within myself, *Surely this earth of ours, in these rude and broken appearances, this unsettled and dangerous state of it, was designed as a dwelling for some unhappy inhabitants, who did or would transgress the law of their Maker, and deeply merit desolation from his hand, and he has here stored up his magazines of divine artillery and death against the day of punishment.*

But to take one step further, how often have the terrible occurrences of nature in the air, earth and sea, and the calamitous incidents in divine providence in several countries, how often have they given an actual confirmation to this sentiment? What sweeping and destructive storms have we and our fathers seen by land and sea, even in this temperate island of Great Britain? What particular floods of water and violent explosions of fire we do read of in the histories of the world? What shocking convulsions of the globe stretching far and wide under the affrighted nations for three or four thousand miles, and spreading terror through every heart? What sudden and huge diruptions of the

caverns of the earth with tremendous bellowings, which have filled its inhabitants with horror and astonishment, which have deformed its blooming surface, and have made wide devastations? What storms and thunders have spread abroad fatal mischiefs? Do not these seem to be evident tokens of the actual displeasure of a God against the inhabitants of this globe? Can we ever suppose that an infinitely good and gracious Being would have orignally so formed and governed the inanimate parts of this lower world, as to produce such deadly concussions and such desolating appearances, if he had not designed it to be the habitation of such creatures, as he foresaw would become rebels against their Creator, and deserve these strokes of his indignation?

The remarks which the late ingenious Doctor Woodward has made in his "Essay toward a Natural History of the Earth," may sufficiently convince any reasonable and attentive reader, that this globe of ours hath suffered such dreadful and desolating convulsions as we speak of, which must have been attended with horrible ruin, calamity and destruction to the men who were then inhabitants of it. He hath found the several strata or layers of the upper crust of the earth, whether marl, marble, clay, chalk, or sand, &c. to have been broken to pieces and dissolved, in America as well as Europe, Asia and Africa; and that huge trees and the bones of animals, together with infinite shells of sea-fishes and other productions of the sea, have been found inclosed in these strata, or beds of marl, clay, chalk, &c. and that at vast depths of earth, as well as at long distances from the sea: And whosoever shall peruse that author will see plainly, that the upper part of this globe has been ruined almost into a chaos, since it was made; and he imputes it with great reason and justice to the general destruction of the world, and the wicked race of men who peopled it, by that flood, of which Moses the ancient Jewish writer gives us so particular an account. And what further dreadful convulsions of nature, and what unknown desolations shall break out hereafter, to punish or to destroy the inhabitants of this globe, lies beyond the reach of our reason to foretell.

Known unto God are all our hearts and our works, and all his own ways from the beginning, and those ways of his are managed and conducted towards us, as becomes a wise and righteous governor; sometimes for our trial and warning, and sometimes for our correction and punishment. Can we ever suppose that the blessed God, who loves all the innocent creatures that he has made, would place them in such a dangerous habitation, where many of them must necessarily be exposed to so many horrible accidents and mortal devastations, even while they continued in their own innocence and in his favour. If we

ualt the writings of Moses, the Jewish prophet, and Peter christian apostle, we shall find that they supposed the great eator to have laid up stores and magazines of ruin and de-uction within the bowels of this earth, which he foresaw would inhabited by a criminal race of beings: And he fore-lained to break open his dreadful treasures of flood and fire proper seasons, to drown and to burn the world together h the inhabitants thereof. When *all flesh had corrupted its y before God*, as Moses speaks, he appointed to destroy man om he had created: *He opened the windows* or flood-gates *heaven, poured down rain incessantly upon the earth for forty ys and forty nights; and the same day were all the fountains the great deep broken up, and all in whose nostrils were the ath of life upon the dry land died, except eight persons*; n. vii. 11—24. And the christian writer tells us, *that the rld, which at that time was overflowed with water, perished; that the heavens and the earth which are now, by the same ine word and providence are kept in store, reserved unto fire inst the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men. en the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the heavens ll be dissolved with a great noise, and the earth and the rks that are therein shall be burned up*; 2 Pet. iii. 6, 7, 10.

Now the great God, who appointed such prodigious quan-ies both of water and fire to be reserved in the bowels of the rth, and among the clouds of heaven, for such a foreseen day general destruction, when the sins of the inhabitants should me to their full measure, did also doubtless prepare his mate-ls, and appoint the days when all the lesser storms and hurri-nes, earthquakes and floods, lightnings and thunders, and nvulsions of nature, should break out and answer those par-ular seasons, when he intended to manifest his terrors to nkind, and to shew his wrath in their wretchedness and de-uction: And he treasured up his magazines of wind, and od, and fire in the air and earth for these purposes. Is this abitation which God has made for the residence of pure and ly beings? Is this such a peaceful place as a kind Creator ould have formed and built for innocent creatures? Or does manage these several scenes of our globe, as though those o dwell upon it maintained their primitive purity and his ori-nal favour? It is absurd to imagine such a conduct of a God wise, so righteous and so merciful.

II. Let us take a survey of the herbs and plants and trees, d all the vegetable beings which grow out of this earth, toge-er with the brute animals which are found on the surface of it, d we shall find more reasons to conclude that man, the chief habitant, is by no means such a creature, so innocent, and so uch a favourite of heaven, as he must needs be when he came

first out of his Maker's hand. It must be granted here agai that the wisdom and goodness of the Creator have displaye themselves in a divine and astonishing manner in the animal an the vegetable world, beyond the utmost reach of our thoughts c our praises: But still we may have leave to enquire, wheth among the numerous herbs and flowers, which are fitted for th support and delight of man, there would have been any noxiou plants or fruits of mortal and malignant juice, appointed t grow out of the earth, without some plain signal mark or cau tion set upon them; if man had continued in his innocent state Can we suppose that amongst the roots, the herbs, and the tree *which are good for food*, the great God would have suffered mi chief, malady and deadly poison to spring up here and ther without any sufficient distinction that man might know how t avoid them? This is the case in our present world; and diseas anguish and death have entered into the bowels and veins c multitudes by an innocent and fatal mistake of these pernicio things for proper food.

It is granted indeed, that when Moses had dressed an furnished his garden in Paradise, with all manner of vegeta ble fruits and pleasures for the new and holy creature ma he tells us of a tree in that garden which was called *the tree c knowledge*, and it was certain death to taste it; Gen. ii. 10, 1 17. But then man had express warning given him to avoid th danger: Death was, as it were, inscribed upon that tree in plai characters, and it was wilful iniquity for him to make so dan gerous an experiment. Nor would there have been any poisonou or hurtful plant suffered to grow upon this earth, if the inhabi tants of it had continued in their primitive holiness, withou some natural mark set upon it, or some divine caution to avoi it. God loves the pure and innocent works of his hands bette than to expose them to such unavoidable perils and miseries, an such mortal dangers and deaths, if they continue in their origi nal innocence. Again, let me enquire whether this earth i almost every soil would have produced such a quantity of *briar thorns, and thistles*, and various weeds, which are so destructiv to corn, the food of man, and create so much vexation to th painful tillers of the field, if man had been innocent, and th earth his habitation had never been accursed for any crime of th inhabitant? Moses, the famous Jewish writer, mentions thi very thing as a divine curse for the sin of man.

Let us arise to the animal or brutal world. There are man creatures indeed made for the service and pleasure of mankind and they are easily governed to answer his purposes in huma life. But are there not many sorts of animals also that weak man can neither govern nor resist, and by which all his race ar exposed to miserable wounds and anguish, and death, whenso

ever they meet them? Would there have been any such creatures in our world as bears and tygers, wolves and lions, animated with such fierceness and rage, and armed with such destructive and bloody teeth and talons, if man the supreme creature in it had not sinned and fallen out of his Maker's kindest care? Or would these murderous animals ever have been let into a paradise made for the habitation of innocent beings; and that without power given to those innocents to govern and restrain them, or without sufficient art or speed to escape them? Would the children of men, innocent and holy, have ever been formed to be the living prey of these devourers? Were the life and limbs of such holy creatures made to become heaps of agonizing carnage? Or would their flesh and bones have been given up to be crushed and churned between the jaws of panthers and leopards, sharks and crocodiles, by land and sea? Are sensible, rational and innocent beings fit morsels for savages of the brutal kind, and were they first made for this purpose by a God of wisdom and goodness? Let brutes be contented to prey upon their fellow-brutes, but let man be their lord and ruler, and free from their assaults: And so he was, says the Jewish law-giver, in his first and innocent state.

Give me leave to proceed in these enquiries. If man were not a fallen sinful creature fit for punishment, would there have been so many tribes of the serpent and viper kind armed with deadly venom to bite and kill man? Would such subtle and active mischiefs have been made and sent to dwell in a world which was all holy and happy? And would the race of all these murderous and destructive brutes of every kind have been propagated for six thousand years in any province of God's dominion, unless he had foreseen at first, that his intellectual creatures there would have rebelled against him, and deserved to be given up to their power and rage? What are the immense flights of locusts which darken the sky, and lay the fields desolate? What are the winged armies of hornets and muscatoes, that make a pleasant land almost intolerable by the incessant and restless attacks they make on mankind with their painful stings? If they are found in the scorching climates of Africa, and in the sultry parts of the East and West Indies, yet one would think such noisome and venomous flies should not swarm upon the hills of Russia, and infest the polar regions, if the Creator had not designed them for the vexation of the nations on all sides of the globe.

What are the innumerable hosts of caterpillars which in a night or two turn a garden into a desart, but so many messengers of the anger of God, against a sinful race of beings that dwell upon this earth? *And since* we are neither able to resist or sub-

due their power, nor avoid their plunder, we may certa fer, that we are not such favourites of heaven as God at fi made us, while we are exposed to the endless attacks, and triumphs of such little despicable insects, and yet and destructive enemies. The troublesome and pe tribes of animal nature both of larger and lesser size, wl fellow-commoners with us upon this great globe, togeth our impotence to prevent or escape their mischiefs, is a s proof that we are not sinless creatures, nor in the full fav love of the God that made us, and that he has quarte armies, his legions among us, as princes do in a re province. Perhaps it will be replied here, that the chiefs of the animal and vegetable world, these po plants and vipers, and savage beasts of prey may be pe to dwell in our earth, for the trial of its inhabitants in of probation, even though they were innocent; especial it is certain that their fatal effects do sometimes now f good and pious men, during their situation here, which i of trial: But God can reward the sufferers in a future st thus absolve or vindicate his justice, wisdom and goo permitting them to be thus exposed in the present life. I answer two ways,

1. There is a great difference to be made between i creatures in a state of probation, and sinful degenerate c in the same state. These mischievous and painful which now fall upon sinful mankind, would have been a teous whether they had been in a state of trial or n most of them plainly declare the punishing hand of well as the probation of creatures, and therefore it s them not to be innocent. Whereas, if these plagues had ed in a world of innocence, many of the wise and holy tants who had suffered these mischiefs, even if they were their trial, would scarcely have found sufficient reason to in their situation, and to give thanks to their Maker, innocent being would surely have occasion and reaso Serpents and bears, stings and poisons are terrible t pure innocents.

2. The state of probation for innocent creatures, w have included death in it, a violent and bloody, or a li and painful death, such as flows from some of these plagu the earth. The destruction of our nature, *our dying turning to dust*, is supposed by the ancient Hebrew hist be a curse of God for the sin of man: And when on forfeited among the whole race of mankind, and the subject and devoted to death by some universal degenera a painful death may properly become a part of the furt *of such creatures* who are to rise again: And any

bus sufferers among them, and who behave well in dying, may rewarded by a happy resurrection. This may be appointed th much more propriety, than than a painful death should be ade a part of the trial of innocent creatures, who had never feited life, nor were ever legally subjected to death. In the se of dying infants, this appears with greater evidence, as I all shew afterward.

Upon the whole therefore, such sort of noxious and destruc- e plants and animals do not seem to be made for a world of nocent, sensible and intellectual beings, to vex, and disturb, poison and destroy them*. Objection. But did not God new to Noah the dominion over the brute creatures? An- er. Not in such an ample manner as he first possessed; but only the fear of man was to fall upon the brutes: Now is does not sufficiently preserve men from their outrage and ischief; whereas in the innocent state, no man would have en poisoned or torn by serpents or lions as now. See ques- n VIII. section 6.

III. The manner of the introduction of the race of man to life and being in this world, is another proof that we are not e innocent favourites of heaven. Can we ever imagine the eat and good God would have appointed intellectual animals be propagated in such a way as should necessarily give such quisite pain and anguish to the mothers who produce them, we had been all accounted in his eyes a race of holy and aless beings? And if the contagion or crime had not been iversal, why should such acute pangs attend almost every male parent in bringing their offspring into the light of life? re not the multiplied sorrows with which the daughters of Eve ntinually bring forth their young, a pretty evident token that ey are not in their original state of favour with that God who eated them, and pronounced a blessing upon them in their opagation†. The Jewish law-giver in the beginning of his story tells us, that *God blessed the first man and woman that made, and bid them be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish e earth, and subdue it;* Gen. i. 28. and the same ancient writer ithin a page or two tells us, that these "multiplied sorrows" the bearing and birth of children are pronounced as a curse om an offended God, chapter iii. 16. Surely the curse is not

* As there happened an entire revolution in the complexion and qualities the minds of the first pair of mankind, so to me, there appears to be evident ications of a designed change and alteration of the material world, and the ture of the animals and vegetables which subsist on this glob-, from what they re w'.en *God pronounced every thing good that he had made.* Doctor Cheyne in essay of "Health and Long Life."

† The author has been censured here for not dropping a tear over the fair r under their sorrows and acute pains: But he imagines he has been dropping ars in every page, and that over every part of mankind, and on them in parti- lar *in several paragraphs of this book.*

as old as the blessing: But sin and sorrow came in together, and spread a wide curse over the birth of man, which before stood only under a divine benediction: Nor is the blessing on human propagation quite taken away, though pains of child-bearing are added to it. Daily observation and experience prove that the blessing of propagation repeated to Noah; Gen. ix. 6. did not take away that curse. See question VIII. at the end.

IV. Let us consider in the next place how the generality of mankind are preserved in life. Some few there are indeed whom divine providence has raised to riches and plenty, and their food is daily provided for them without care or toil; but the millions of human creatures in all the nations of the earth are forced to support a wretched life by hard labour of the body, and intense and grievous fatigue of their joints and limbs, and all their natural powers. What dreadful risks both of life and limbs do multitudes run through in order to purchase their own necessary food, and to support their young helpless families at home? What waste of the hours of sweet repose at midnight, as well as long and slavish and painful toils of the day, do multitudes sustain, in order to procure daily nourishment? *It is by the sweat of their brows they obtain their bread;* it is by a continual exhausting their vital spirits, that many of them are forced to relieve their own hunger, and to keep off death, as well as to feed their young offspring that otherwise would be born merely to perish. If we survey the lower tribes of mankind, even in Great Britain, in a land of freedom and plenty, a climate temperate and fruitful, a country which abounds with corn and fruits, and is stored with beasts and fowl, and fish, in rich variety for food, what a hard shift do ten thousand families make to keep out famine and support life? Their whole time is devoured with the labours of the flesh, and their souls ever beset and almost eaten up with gnawing cares and anxieties, to answer this important question, *what shall I eat and what shall I drink* even in the poorest and the coarsest manner? But if we send our thoughts to the sultry regions of Africa, or the frosts and snows of Norway, to the rocks and desarts of Lapland and northern Tartary, what a hideous and frightful thing is human life in those climates? How is the rational nature of man almost lost between their slavery, their brutality, and their incessant toils and hardships? They are treated like brutes by their lords, and they live like dogs and asses among labours, and wants, hunger and weariness, blows and burdens without end. Did God appoint this for innocents? Perhaps, you will say, there is a pleasure in eating and drinking, which answers to the pain of procuring our food: But alas! Can this short pleasure of a *few minutes*, in trolling a few morsels down our throats, or *washing* the gullet with plenty of liquids, be supposed to give

a full recompence for the incessant labours of life? Does it bear any proportion to the length of toil, pain and hazard, and the tiresome fatigues of our spirits and our limbs, wherewith the provisions of life are procured? Moses acquaints us indeed, that man even in his innocent and blessed state was placed in a noble and lovely garden, and was appointed to *dress it*: This was no curse, but a wise appointment of the God of nature by intermingled labour and exercise to preserve our health and vigour. But when the same writer comes to introduce the toil and fatigues we are forced to sustain, in order to secure us from starving, when he speaks of *eating our bread in the sweat of our brows*; Gen. iii. 17—19. he acknowledges this to be another of the curses of God for the sin of man, and it is scattered all round the globe*.

V. Consider the character, temper and quality of mankind in general, even the multitudes of millions of mankind in all nations, with regard to religion and virtue, and then it will be hard to persuade ourselves that these are creatures, who enjoy the favour of their Maker as his children, or bear the image of their common Father in knowledge and goodness, as his original and native offspring ought to do. I grant there are here and there some few persons who are restored to some degrees of conformity to him that made them: they are become his children by repentance and return to God, by a divine change passed upon their natures, and they enjoy a share of his special love: But the bulk of the world are of another stamp and character, and sufficiently shew there is some sinful and fatal contagion spread

* It is strange that any man should say, in this sentence of God, Gen. iii. 15—19. "no curse is pronounced upon either Adam's body, soul or posterity; that the sorrow of child-bearing is not inflicted as a curse; that the labours of life were encreased, but not as a curse; and that this death was not a curse, &c." I would fain ask, what is a curse, if some natural evil pronounced and executed upon a person, or thing, be not so, especially when it is pronounced upon the account of sin, and comes from God himself as supreme governor and judge? And even the curse on the ground falls properly on the man who tills it.

It is granted, that all these may be sanctified by the covenant of grace to good people, and turned to their advantage. The wisdom of God *can turn curses into blessings*; Gen. i. 20. Deut. xxiii. 5. Yet the original pronunciation and infliction of these evils was designed as a curse, or punishment for sin, as it is written, Gal. iii. 10. *Cursed is every one who continueth not in all things*, &c. And I think it will appear evidently to every one who with common sense and without prejudice reads the history of the fall of man in Gen iii. 16—19. And that death was designed as a curse on man for sin, is evident; *for Christ suffered this curse for us*; Gal. iii. 13.

It is granted also, that God might in Noah's time take off, perhaps, some part of the curse from the ground, Gen. v. 29. and bless it with greater fruitfulness; he might renew his blessing on propagation, Gen. ix. 1. and many other blessings may be added: But still the curses of hard toil and sweating, of painful child-bearing, and of death, may be, and are actually continued through all generations, though some blessings may be mingled with them: And this is sufficient to answer all *these objections*. See more, question VIII. at the end.

through the inhabitants of this province of God's dominion. John the apostle in one of his letters, tells us, that there are few who *are born of God*, as new creatures, but *the whole world lies in wickedness*; I John v. 19.

Would the blessed God make a world of intelligent creatures so ignorant and thoughtless of himself, and so insolent and rebellious against him as man now is? Can we think of that gross and stupid ignorance of the true God which reigns through vast tracts of land in Asia, Africa, and America, and the thick darkness as well as toil and slavery which buries all the heathen countries, and reduces them yet further almost to brutes and savages; can we think of the abominable idolatries, the lewd and the cruel rites of worship, which have been spread through some whole nations; the impious, the wicked and ridiculous superstitions which are practised among the greatest part of the world, and yet believe the blessed God would put such wretched and polluted workmanship out of pure hands? Can we survey the bold and desperate impiety and profaneness, the swearing and cursing, and wild blasphemy that is practised and pronounced daily and nightly, among vast multitudes in those countries which know and profess the true God; can we behold that almost universal neglect of God, his fear, and his worship, and of the obedience due to him, which is found even among those inhabitants of this our world, who say they believe in God, and yet imagine that those wretches love their Maker, that they wear his image, and are conformable to his will, as his original creature must and ought to be?

Nor are mankind only negligent of their duty to God, but they seem to have abandoned their duties to their fellow-creatures also. Can we think of the perpetual practices of fraud and villany in the commerce of mankind, the innumerable instances of oppression and cruelty which run through the world; the pride and humour of the great, the wrath and ambition of most princes, their wild and mad extravagances of crime and folly, as well as their boundless insolence and tyranny over their subjects, and the endless iniquities and mischiefs that arise from envy, malice and revenge practised among lower people; and yet suppose that man was ever made with these vices in him, and these disorders around him, by that wisdom and goodness that created him? If we take a survey of the impure scenes of lust and intemperance and drunken madness which defy the day-light, and pollute the darkness; if we think of the monstrous barbarities which are continually committed by men in the christian inquisitions of Spain, Portugal and Italy, and among all the brutal and wicked tribes of heathenism, the *African* savages, and the American cannibals, who kill and roast *their fellow*-creatures, and eat up men as they *eat bread*; can we

still imagine that mankind is a race of beings, who abide in their own native and original state, such as they came from the hands of their Maker?

Shall it be said in opposition to this view of things, that it is not the greatest part of mankind that are so shamefully ignorant and so abominably vile? I answer, That in matters of religion the greatest part of the world are gross idolaters; they adore the souls of the dead for gods, or they worship the sun and moon, or beasts, birds, images, names, fabled gods, stocks and stones, or any thing but the true God: They neither know their Maker, nor love, nor worship him. There are many whole nations that practise abominable vices by general custom and consent, by the approbation of their wise men, and by long tradition, if not by the authority of their laws. This has been abundantly demonstrated by learned writers of the present age, both from the modern travels of the inquisitive, and from ancient histories, when they would shew in what need mankind stood of a divine revelation.

In matters of morality, though the bulk of mankind are not guilty of the very vilest crimes with regard to their fellow-creatures, yet if we consider the numerous corrupt inclinations and sinful passions that sway all the world, the lesser vices and irregularities that work and run through the hearts and lives even of the best and most civilized parts of the universe; if we observe the strange blindness of the understandings of men in divine things, the unfaithfulness of conscience, the unwillingness to know any mortifying and self-denying truths and duties, the general prevalence of appetite and sinful desires over the powers and the rules of reason, and that not only among the unthinking multitude, but even where reason is consulted and makes its feeble remonstrances; if we consider the universal disorder among the faculties of mankind; and the violation of that harmony and order wherein consists innocence, virtue and peace: If we add to all this heap of confusion, their general thoughtlessness and disregard of God, and their gross defects in benevolence to their neighbours, it will appear plain enough, *that there is not one upon earth that is truly righteous and without sin;* and it is more abundantly evident, that mankind are far from a state of innocence and perfect virtue: They are fallen from God, and have lost that likeness to their Maker, and that love of him, and those principles of universal virtue which doubtless were implanted in them by so wise, so righteous, so kind, and benevolent a Creator. That far the greatest number of men are evil, or greatly criminal, was a known sentiment of the ancients. The wiser and more considerate heathens saw and bewailed it, though they knew not how to account for it. Οι πλειστοι κακοι, *most men are wicked,* was the sentence of a Greek

philosopher, and the common opinion of the most intelligent observers of mankind. The poets were generally loose enough themselves, but they were wise enough to observe the universal wickedness of mankind and agree entirely in this obvious and general truth. Virgil tells us, *that few are virtuous enough to escape the punishments of the other world:* He brings in a ghost telling his son,

"Pauci læta arva tenemus."

And in this life the character of human nature among the poets is this:

"Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata."
Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas,
Audax omnia perpeti.———Hor.

And that vice is early and universal he says,

"Nam vitiis nemo sine nascitur."

And when this author speaks of young men in general, he gives them this character:

"Cereus in vitum flecti, monitoribus asper."

Seneca says just the same,

"Pejora juvenes facile præcepta audiunt."

And Juvenal abounds in this account of human nature;

"Rari quippe boni: Numero vix sunt totidem que
Thebarum portæ, vel divitis ostia Nili.
Quæ tam festa dies ut cesset prodere furem?
——Ad mores natura recurrit
Damnatos, fixa & mutari nescia.——
Quisnam hominum est quem tu contentum videris uno
Flagitio?———Dociles imitandis
Turpibus & pravis omnes sumus."———Juv.

They own indeed there was once a golden age, or a state of innocence at first. Their reason told them, that the great God must and did make man upright and good; but they imagined that mankind did degenerate by degrees in successive ages, and at last grew universally wicked. This is asserted not only by satyrical writers, but by those of a gentler disposition and a softer pen. Ovid and Manilius were not satyrists, yet they speak the very same language:

"Protinus erupit venæ pejoris in ævum
Omne nefas: Fugere pudor, verumque fidesque.
In quorum subiere locum fraudesque dolique
Insidiæque, & vis, & amor sceleratus habendi·
Victa jacet pietas, terras Astræa reliquit."——Ov.

"Perque tot ætates hominum, tot tempora & annos,
Tot bella, & varios etiam sub pace labores,
Cum fortuna fidem quærat, vix invenit usquam.
At quanta est scelerum moles per sæcula cuncta?
In populo scelus est: Et abundant cuncta furore,
Et fas atque nefas mistum, legesque per ipsas
Sævit nequities."———Manil.

The sense of all which is thus represented in English.

"There are very few who die that go to heaven, or a state of happiness. We are always desiring and pursuing forbidden things. Mankind is bold to rush into forbidden wickedness; nor is any man born without vices: Young men most readily hearken to evil counsels; they are soft as wax to be moulded into vice, but rough and rugged to their best monitors. Good men are very few, scarce as many as the gates of the city Thebes, or the mouths of the Nile. What day is there that does not shew us some new malefactors? Nature recurs to its own wicked manners, is fixed in it, and knows not how to change. How few persons will you find contented with one sort of wickedness? We are all very forward to learn and imitate whatever is base or wicked. After the golden age, and some few following seasons, all manner of iniquity broke out: Modesty, truth, and faithfulness are quite fled away, in whose place came deceit, mischief, violence and wicked covetousness. Piety lay subdued, and justice left the earth. And through so many ages of men, so many murderous wars, and labours, and toils, in time of peace, there is scarce such a thing as honesty to be found; but through all ages there is an abundant load of crimes: Wickedness runs through the people: Madness rages, fills and overwhelms all things. Right and wrong are all mingled, and iniquity reigns even through the very laws of men." This was the common complaint of the most observing heathens in their age, as it is ours in the present day.

VI. Not only those who are grown up to mature age, but even mankind in its younger years, before it is capable of proper moral actions, discovers the principles of iniquity and the seeds of sin. What young ferments of spite and envy, what native wrath and rage sometimes are found in the little hearts of infants, and sufficiently discovered by their little hands, and their eyes, and their watchful countenances, even before they have learned to speak, or to know good and evil? What additional crimes of lying and deceit, what obstinacy and perverseness proceed to blemish their younger years*?

* Here our discourse is at once confronted by bringing in the words of our Saviour, Mat. xviii. 3. *Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.* Little children say they, are here made the patterns of humility, meekness, and innocence; and in several other places of scripture, a state of childhood is represented as innocent, meek and humble; and therefore they have no such native vices. I answer this objection by granting, That children appear to be of a much meeker and milder temper than grown persons, because they have much fewer temptations to vices of various kinds than grown persons meet with. Their inward vices are seldom awakened and provoked so much as they are in advancing years. Let it be further observed, that this humility of children which is recommended in this text, is their freedom from that ambition which possessed the disciples, when they sought *who should be greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*

How little knowledge or thought of God, their Creator and Governor, is found among children even when they begin to distinguish between good and evil, right and wrong? What an utter disregard of him that made them, and of the duties they owe to him? How hard is it to teach them to know their Maker, and to obey him? And no wonder it is so in children, since men and women are just the same. Yet, farther, how little prevailing sense or practice of what is morally right and good is seen among them, when they begin to act agreeably to their own childish and youthful age? How contrary is their conduct to the laws of reason, which are the laws of their Maker? How do the evil passions of nature, and irregular appetites and vices of the will prevail in them, and over them betimes? Even from their first capacity of acting as moral creatures in the world; how are they led away to practise falsehood and injury to their play-fellows, and that sometimes with insolence, cruelty and revenge? How often are they engaged in bold instances of disobedience to parents or teachers, and in acts of shameful intemperance? They *do evil with greediness* both to themselves and to their fellow-creatures: Nor do I think there is one youth in the world who has not, on particular occasions, manifested some early inclinations to one vice or another. Would this have been the case, if mankind had been just such creatures as they came from their Maker's hand?

Nor can these vicious propensities be imputed to any ill influences of custom, or education, or example; for many of these things appear in children before they can take any notice of any such examples set before them, or are capable of such imitation. And it might be added, that even in the best of families, where good examples stand round them, where children from their youngest years are instructed in their duty, and encouraged and excited to practise virtue and religion, and persuaded to it by all the motives of authority and love, and led by many examples as well as by precepts, *yet their hearts naturally run astray from God.* The greatest part of them in their childhood visibly follow the corrupt influences of sense, appetite and passion, and in very early years they manifest the inward evil principles of pride, obstinacy and disobedience: And multitudes, even in such families, grow up to practise many vices, and to

I grant also, that young children in general are really meek and innocent, in comparison with persons grown up, who have increased in pride and malice; and this is enough for such representations in scripture. But after all, I ask, are not these sad descriptions which I have given of the vicious tempers of many children, just and true? Does not daily observation discover them? And if so, whence does this evil temper arise, which at any time discovers itself in any of these little creatures? What is the root that brings forth such early bitter fruit? I say, whence can it proceed, or what is it, but some innate evil disposition that they bring into the world with them? This will appear more evidently in the following pages, wherein other pretended causes are excluded and refuted.

publish the iniquity and shame of their nature, in opposition to all the influences of instruction and advice, example and authority. And if all children were utterly untaught and unrestrained, even in the years of childhood, these iniquities would break out and discover themselves with much more evidence and shame: This appears in particular families, even in such countries and such towns which are civilized by learning and politeness. There are a thousand instances wherein this is evident in fact; that where the education of children is neglected, the whole generation becomes vicious: So among the heathens, there are whole nations wicked, perhaps without an exception.

VII. To give yet a fuller confirmation of this truth, that mankind have a sinful and corrupt nature in them, let it be observed, that where persons have not only been educated from their youngest years in all the practices of piety, virtue and goodness, as far as parents could influence them, but where young persons themselves have taken something of a religious turn betimes, and have sought after true wisdom and piety, what wretched and perpetual hindrances do they find within themselves? What inward oppositions are working in the heart, and too often interrupt this holy course of life? What vanity of mind, what sinful appetites, what sensuality and forgetfulness of God, what evil affections, what vicious thoughts and wishes, and tendencies of heart rise up in contradiction to their honest and professed purposes of virtue and holiness, and lead them astray too often from their duty both to God and man? Even some of the best of men, who have observed their own hearts, are forced to cry out, *Oh, wretched creature that I am!* What vicious principles do *I find in my members warring against* reason and *the law of my mind, and bringing me* too often *into captivity to sin?* Whether St. Paul complained thus concerning himself or no in his letter to the Romans, chapter vii. verses 23, 24. or whether he spoke it in the name of mere pretenders to religion, yet *as there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and never sins;* so I am persuaded, there is not a man who cannot in some measure take up this complaint, that he is sometimes led astray by sense, appetite or passion, in greater or lesser instances, against the better dictates of his mind and conscience: There is not a man who may not mourn over himself in this language, *O wretched creature indeed! Who shall deliver me* from this native disorder, this inward plague, these evil propensities of my nature? *There is none perfectly righteous; no not one.*

I may sum up the argument contained in the three last considerations in this manner, viz. If great multitudes of mankind are grossly sinful, and *if every* individual, without exception,

is actually a sinner against the law of his Creator; if propensities and inclinations appear even in youngest years every child becomes an actual sinner almost so soon as capable of moral or immoral actions; we have just reas conclude, there is some original and universal degeneracy s over the whole race of men from their birth: For it is not supposed that the wisdom, equity and goodness of God w ever have produced such a world, wherein every single cre coming out of their Maker's hands in the original state of i cence and full power to obey, should be thus defiled by their wilful and chosen disobedience.

It has been said indeed, in opposition to this argument if the first man, even Adam, did fall into sin, though h made innocent and perfect, then among a million of creat every one might sin, though he was made as innocent a perfect as Adam, and that this is a better account of so univ an apostacy. To which I answer, There is indeed a bare p bility of this event: But the improbability that every cre should fall into sin, is in the proportion of a million to one. I prove it thus: If a million of creatures were made but equal probability to stand or fall; and if all the numbers one to one million inclusively, were set in a rank, it is plain it is a million to one that just any single proposed and detern number of all this multitude should fall by sin: Now the sum is one of these numbers, that is, the last of them, and c quently, in this way of calculation, it is a million to one ag the supposition, that the whole number of men should fall. yet further, if they were all made in a far greater probabil standing than falling, which the justice and goodness of seem to require, then it is much more than a million to one all should sin against their Creator without exception. therefore the weakness of this objection; though I have several triumphs, in a few pages, supported only by this a ment, which has the proportion of more than a whole milli one against it. And yet this argument will grow still ten t sand times stronger, if we suppose ten thousand millions to lived since the creation.

It has been said again, if the nature of our first pa was not originally corrupt, who committed the first sin, anc casioned the suffering, neither is my nature originally cor who am no ways concerned in the commission of that sin only am thereby subjected to suffering. I answer, But if th of our first parent laid him under guilt, tainted and d his own nature, both soul and body, and I am derived him as my spring and head, I may be thus defiled also, rece a taint both in soul and body, from the first criminal, as I shewn afterwards.

VIII. It may be further argued, that man is a creature fallen from his original state, because he is so far enfeebled or corrupted, that he has not a ready and practical power* to perform the law of his Maker, which yet continues to be written in his heart by nature. Does not this law of reason, and nature, and conscience, require us *to love God with all our heart and soul, to deal with our neighbour as we think it proper he should deal with us*, and to govern our own appetites and passions by rules of reason? Does it not require also, that these things must be done in perfection, and without defect, whether they regard God, our neighbour, or ourselves? Doth it not demand that we should adore and honour, fear and trust in the great God that made us, and obey all that we know to be his will in a perfect manner? Does it not prescribe constant justice, truth and goodness toward our neighbour, without one evil thought, one covetous wish, one envious, or malicious act of the will, or the tongue, or the hand, towards him. Does it not demand that our self-government, or our temperance should not indulge one irregular passion, or appetite? And does it not require, that every one of these lower powers should be perfectly subject to reason and conscience? Now is there any man on earth can say, that he has a ready and practical power to perform all these laws which his Maker has written in his heart without any sinful irregularity in thought, word or deed?

Perhaps you will insist on it still, that man has still within him those faculties of understanding, and will, and affection, which have a natural power to perform these duties; and perhaps you will prove it too, because whensoever, according to

* Observe, I do not assert here, that man has not a remote, speculative and natural power to obey the law of God, but it is abundantly evident he has not an immediate, proximate and moral or practical power to do it, since not one of all mankind have ever done it. And let it be observed, that it is the want of this moral disposition, this practical power of perfect obedience to the law of God, which I call insufficience, ability and impotence, as is shewn at large under question XIII. and scripture uses the same language.

And here I desire it may be observed also, that this distinction of sufficient power into natural and moral will solve the objections derived from a pretence, that "God would never continue mankind under such a law which they have not present sufficient power to obey." This is certain matter of fact *that there is a law written in the heart or conscience of man*; Rom. ii. 15. which requires greater perfection of obedience than man has a practical or moral power to fulfil though he may have natural powers equal to the command.

I add yet further, that though many men, by the usual aids of divine grace may obey this law of God, so far as it is necessary, according to the new covenant, and may obtain the favour of God, yet they cannot fulfil it, so far as to obtain justification or acceptance according to this law, which requires perfect obedience, and curses every one that fails in it; Rom. ii. 9. and chapter iii. 19, 20. Gal. iii. 10. And this hope of divine aid, and divine acceptance is richly sufficient to encourage our utmost diligence in all the duties of obedience, and secure men from despair, and from the neglect of religion and virtue. Thus it appears, that this impotence of men to fulfil the law perfectly, is no discouragement from the *utmost diligence in religion.*

any scheme of religion, a man is made holy, he has no new faculties given him, and therefore these natural faculties which he has are sufficient. I answer, If any man be made holy, though he has no new faculties given him, yet their vicious propensities are so far subdued or taken away, and the sinful tendencies of all his powers are so far changed into that which is virtuous and holy: But it is evident in our present state in this world, that the propensities of the will and affections to that which is evil, are so much superior and prevalent, that I believe there is no man lives one day without breaking this perfect law of his Maker, in thought word or deed: And therefore, though by reason of his natural faculties he may have a remote and speculative sufficiency of natural power to obey his Maker's law, yet he has no proximate and practical, or moral sufficiency to perform it, by reason of the perverse and sinful bias of his will and affections, and the weak influences of understanding, reason and conscience, which are so easily and continually overcome by sinful appetites and inclinations.

It should be considered further, that the outward temptations to which mankind are exposed all around them in the present state, especially in the vigour and perfection of animal life, are evidently too strong to be effectually and constantly resisted and overcome by these enfeebled faculties of reason and conscience, while, at the same time, his will and affections, as well as his appetites and passions, have a powerful bias and propensity to yield to the temptation, and commit sin. So that if we take a full survey of all these circumstances in which mankind are now situated, if we consider their strong propensities to evil within their own nature, the powerful temptations to evil that surround them without, and the feeble efforts of their guardian powers, reason and conscience, to resist all these oppositions, and to break through all these impediments; and if we add here to the constant and daily evidence of all this, by the constant and daily sins of mankind, we must be forced to acknowledge, that his moral and practical powers in the present state, are by no means proportionate to the law of God, and to his duties, but vastly inferior to them. Now, would a wise, a just and a merciful God, who is abundant in goodness, have formed such sensible and intellectual creatures orignally by his own hand, in such a wretched estate, that their powers and capacities should be so much below their duties, that they break his law daily and continually, and it may be said, that whatsoever natural faculties they have, yet they have not a ready and practical sufficiency of power to perform it?

Shall it be objected further, that God cannot require more *of man* than he has given him power to perform, and therefore *his law cannot* require perfection, if he has not power perfectly

obey it; for the demands of a law must be limited by the ›wers of the subject, and cannot exceed it. To this I might ıswer.—I. That the demands of a law must not exceed the ›wers of an innocent and new-made creature, just as he comes om the hand of God; but when he has some way or other ined and enfeebled, perverted or broken his original powers, brought an evil bias into them, may not the law of God still ›ntinue to demand such obedience, which he has not a present ıfficiency of power to yield or perform? Or I might perhaps etter answer thus:—II. That the law of our Maker in its de-ıands must be limited by the original, absolute and natural ower of the creature to perform it, which was then also morally nd practically sufficient for the purpose: but when a race of eings, by their own folly, have so perverted and discomposed ıese natural faculties, that they have not an immediate, proxi-ıate and practical power to perform the law of God, this does ot destroy nor abate the commands of the law of our Maker: ut they stand in full perfection of authority and demand, since ıe natural powers are still continued, though our perverse incli-ations, which is indeed our moral impotence, are continually ırrying us to disobey these commands.

Shall it be said again, though we break the laws of our laker so frequently, yet he knows the weakness of our frame, nd he pities and pardons infirm and feeble creatures, where ıere is any desire to please him, though their disobedience be ery frequent. But in answer to this, I would say, first, It is the ew covenant, or covenant of grace, which holds forth God as itying and pardoning his sinful creatures; not the law of cre-tion or innocence, by which all men are condemned for sin. econdly, I would enquire, did God make such creatures so ıfirm and feeble in their original state, as that they should so equently and continually offend their Maker, and want forgive-ess? Did he give them such a law to govern their actions, as hould never, never be fulfilled by any one of them, but should e daily and constantly broken by them; and that the new-made reature should want daily and continual pardon? Would a God, ho adjusts the proportions of all things in infinite wisdom, give law to his creatures which is so disproportionate to their original owers, that even in the state of their creation they are almost nder some sort of necessity of breaking it, and stand in need of aily and repeated forgiveness? Does not all this view of things ive us abundant conviction that mankind is now a degenerate eing, and not such as it was created by that wise, that righteous, nd that merciful God who made it?

If those who are most unwilling to acknowledge this uni-ersal and early depravation of man, would look into themselves aily, and observe all the sinful and irregular turns of their own

heart, how ready and propense they are to sin and folly in greater or lesser instances, how soon appetite and passion start up in opposition to reason and conscience, how often they prevail over their better sentiments, how frequently the perfect demands of the law of God are broken by them, how thoughtless and forgetful they are of their divine Maker and Governor, how cold and languishing their affections to what is religious and holy, how little love they have to truth, how little delight in virtue by nature, how averse to commune with God, while they are fond and violent in the pursuit of trifles and follies; could any of them think that they are such innocent and holy creatures as God at first had created us, and that they have been such from their childhood or their entrance into the life and state of man? Surely a little more frequent and accurate observation of their own heart would lead them into a better acquaintance with themselves, and convince them feelingly that there was some early degeneracy from the first rectitude of human nature.

IX. Another proof of the degeneracy and fall of mankind is this, that they have not only lost their innocence and the image of their Maker, and their original sufficiency of power to fulfil the demands of his law, but they also lie evidently under his actual displeasure, which could not be their primæval state. As we have taken a short view of the sins of men, let us also briefly survey the miseries of mankind, and see whether they look like a race of beings such as their Creator made them, or are partakers of his original favour.

Think of the thousands of rational creatures descending hourly to death and the grave. Among these a few are destroyed by some sudden stroke; but far the greater part go thither by painful and slow approaches? Death and the grave, a sore punishment! A dark and shameful prison! Which would never have been made for a race of intellectual creatures, persisting in the beauty and honour of their innocence and virtue, and abiding in the original favour of him that gave them life and being "Death is the wages of sin;" Rom. vi. 23. and from this punishment of sin there is none of the race of men can plead freedom, or claim a discharge. If mankind had stood in their original sinless state, can we ever suppose that any of them should have been made sacrifices to death? Much less that every one of them should be bound to certain destruction? And especially that half their race should have been doomed to die before seven years old, that is, before they reach a tenth-part of the present age of man, or have done any thing in life worth living for? Did God make rational creatures to destroy them by millions? Were men at first made for death? Methinks every block of mortality in a church-yard, and every grave-stone there assures us that mankind have lost their innocence. But let

ɔceed to other miseries that attend us in life-time, many of hich end in death and dissolution, and all hasten us down to ıe grave.

Think next of the multitudes that are racked day and night ı their couches, with extreme torture, by the gout and stone, ıe cholic and rheumatism, and all manner of acute and painful iseases; and then say, are these the torments which a merciful ɔd could ever contrive for a sinless creature? Think of the ismal and destructive scenes of warfare and bloodshed, that ıve one time or another overspread all nations. Does not ıture furnish this world with woes enough, or does not man-nd die fast enough, but they must wound and slaughter each her? Cast your thoughts over a field of battle, where thousands such noble creatures as man are destroyed like brutes, are ıin by mutual hatred, and perish by sharp and bloody strokes, ıd the fatal engines of death; and many thousands more lie on e cold ground, with their flesh and limbs battered and torn, ɔunded and panting in extreme anguish, and die by degrees: re these such scenes of innocence and peace as mankind were ade for? Are these the signals of their Maker's love, or of eir own original virtue?

Yet again, let us send our thoughts through the long ranks ıd files of war. What unknown multitudes are bred up to this ɔody trade, and sell their lives daily for the price of a few ·nce, or for a morsel of meat and sustenance. Multitudes are ·iven by their princes against their wills into the wars, or drag-ɔd on by their leaders to destruction and death. What millions e constrained to stand the volley of small shot in the field of ıttle, or to venture up to the mouths of cannon in the siege of a wn or city? They are forced to hazard their limbs and their ɔes, and even their eternal interests, by fighting against they ıow not who, and destroying men they know not why. They e put under a necessity of killing their fellow-creatures, or ·ing killed by them, because wild and vicious princes quarrel ɔout the bounds of their dominion, or about some trifles of state ıd impertinences of honour. Some of them who have any ·mains of conscience, are forced to fight against their own best terests of liberty and property, as well as against the interest God and goodness. Whole nations are thus appointed to aughter by the tyrannical laws of those that rule over them in ırious parts of the world; and sometimes there are but very w in a whole country that are excused from bearing arms and ıtering into these dismal and deathful circumstances, when their nperors shall tell them that their humour or pleasure requires . Would this have been the fate of mankind if they had stood ı perfect innocence, or if all nations were now born in their *·iginal purity?*

Think of the vast numbers that are swallowed up in th mighty waters by the rage of stormy winds and seas, which ar roused to destroy mortals, and pronounce aloud the wrath o heaven. Review a little what immense multitudes have bee swept away by the pestilence, or have had their nature and lif worn out by the long and tedious agonies of famine? Woul famine and pestilence, with all the dismal train of lingering hor rors which attend them, have been ever made for innocent crea tures, to have thus swept away whole nations of them, of ever age and sex, men, women, and children, without distinction?

Think yet again, what numbers of mankind have bee crushed into misery and death, in their own dwellings, an buried there by earthquakes, or have had all their bones bruised their limbs disjointed and broken, and their flesh painfully bat tered by the fall of houses, and been buried alive in the ruins o whole towns and villages, while their neighbours have bee burned or drowned in multitudes, by the dismal eruptions of fir and water, or destroyed terribly by deluges of liquid fire, break ing out of the earth? Survey these scenes of horror, and the say, would a God of goodness and justice treat innocent crea tures at this rate, or expose them to these formidable mischiefs

Carry your thoughts over the seas to the country of canni bals and other savages, where by the custom of nations, thou sands of their conquered enemies, or prisoners of war, are some times cruelly put to death, to pave the road to their own palac with their skulls, or they are offered in sacrifice to their idols sometimes they are roasted in slow fires, as I before hinted, an tortured and eaten by their barbarous conquerors: Add to thi all the former miseries, and then say, whether this world doe not look like a province half forsaken of its gracious governor or almost given up to mischief and misery.

Some perhaps will say here, it is easy to account for a mul titude of these miseries, without any universal degeneracy o corruption of human nature. It is but a small part of mankin who are overwhelmed by earthquakes, who are drowned in th seas, who are destroyed by war or famine, who are racked wit long and terrible distempers, who are eaten by savages, or pu to death by the hands of violence and cruelty; and perhaps thos who suffer peculiar afflictions are punished for their own persons iniquities. Answer. Take a just survey of all the persons wh have fallen under these miseries, and there is not the least reaso to conclude they have all been sinners above others. Do not th calamities of war, and famine, and pestilence, and earthquake and inundations, &c. spread promiscuously without distinctio through a whole country at once, and involve the best and wor of men in the same misery and ruin? And is there any groun to imagine, that those spreading devastations make any distin

tion between greater and lesser sinners? No, by no means. It is sufficiently evident that all persons are liable to them, and whole nations at once suffer by them. Such is the universal degeneracy of human nature, that wheresoever these calamities come, they find none innocent: and it is the general situation of degenerate mankind, under just displeasure of God that made them, which exposes them all to these destructions.

But to proceed in a survey of the miseries of mankind. Think of the innumerable common misfortunes which attend human life; look into the bills of mortality, observe what multitudes perish by these accidents in one city every week, and infer what a much larger number of these accidents injure the health, the ease, the limbs of mankind, and fill their lives with pain, though they are not brought immediately to the grave. Think of the mischiefs which are continually plotting and contriving in all the towns and villages of the world, whereby perhaps one half of the race of men try to defraud, circumvent, and do injury and mischief to their neighbours; and the bad and the good suffer promiscuously in this world in their possessions and properties, in their comforts of life, in their health, and in all that is dear to them. Take a view of these extensive and reigning vices and miseries, and then say, whether this world be not a part of the creation of God, which bears plain and signal tokens of the frowns and displeasure of its Maker.

It would add much to the heap of human misery, if we should consider the cutting sorrows which arise from the daily loss of our dearest comforts. What groans and heart-achs and wailings of the living surround the pillows of dying friends and dearer children? What symptoms of piercing and painful distress attend their remains when they are conveyed to the grave? And by such losses all the comforts of future life become disrelishing, and every new scene of sorrow is embittered with double gall. Let it be observed, that in the sorrows, miseries and deaths of mankind round the world, especially in the more civilized part of it, there is scarce one person sick, or in pain, miserable or dying, but several others sustain a considerable share of misery by the strong ties of nature, or of interest, the dear bonds of friendship, and the tender and sympathizing powers which are mingled in our composition. This diffuses a personal calamity through whole families, this multiplies human sorrows and miseries into an endless number, and makes us justly enquire, can all this be contrived to torment innocence and holiness, or to punish creatures who continue such as God made them at first?

It would still swell the load, if we bring in the many teazing vexations and cutting disappointments which arise from the falsehood of pretended friends, and from the cruelty of kindred,

from whom we expected nothing but benevolence and love, together with the everlasting disquietudes that are rising in some families hourly from little crossing occurrences of life. Can this be a state of happiness, where we meet with perpetual contradiction to our opinions and to our wills, which awaken the soul too often into rage and impatience, and ruffle the spirits of most men? Add to all this the inward anguish that springs from all our own uneasy and unruly passions of every kind: And where is the breast that has not some of these uneasy passions born with it, and reigning in it, or at least frequently making their assaults upon our peace? Bring in here all the wrath and resentment kindled in the hearts of men, all the envy and malice that burns within it, all the imaginary fears and the real terrors of future distress coming upon us, all the rage and despair of lost blessings that were put within our hopes, and all the vicious and ungovernable ferments of animal nature, which torment the spirit all the day, and forbid our nightly repose. Would these things ever have happened if man had continued in favour with his Maker, and had not been almost abandoned to his own folly, and in a great measure given up to misery?

Suppose it should be objected here against all this reasoning, in some such manner as this: It is granted that men may make sorrows for themselves, and may be punished by their follies, if they chuse to create their own miseries: But let us compare together all the real necessary sorrows which any man suffers, and the comforts which he enjoys, and when we have put them into the balance, let us remember, that so far as these comforts reach, they will answer for an equal share of sorrows and calamities, and absolve the justice of God from treating his innocent creatures amiss. Then all the over-balancing sorrows may be esteemed but necessary even for an innocent race of beings to sustain, in a state of trial, in order to future rewards or punishments: And the great God well knows how to reward all that over-balance of sufferings hereafter, which every man sustains here beyond the proportion of his comforts. In answer to this,

I would survey the sinful and wretched inhabitants of this world round the globe, and then humbly enquire, doth one-quarter of mankind behave so well in this world in their state of trial, as to give any observing person reason to expect, that they shall ever partake of rewards hereafter? Is there found among mankind such a dutiful and obedient conduct towards God, or such a life of strict virtue and goodness towards their neighbour, as to entitle one fourth part of men to the rewards of futurity, and consequently to any equal recompence hereafter, for the former over-balance of their sorrows here? And if not, how then shall this same over-balance of calamities and miseries be ac-

unted for? It is confessed that it was inflicted on them as inno-
nt creatures in a state of trial, and therefore justice requires
at they should have a recompence for these over-balancing sor-
ws, which yet they are never likely to receive. Upon the
ole therefore we cannot well impute the superior sorrows of
ankind merely to such a state of probation; but they are rather
be accounted for as the effects of some universal degeneracy,
d the just displeasure of the righteous Creator and Governor
this world. But to make this appear yet plainer, I proceed
the next consideration.

X. Not only those who are grown up in the practice of ini-
ity, who may be supposed to be punished for their own sins
d follies, but even all mankind in their earliest infancy are
der some tokens of the displeasure of their Maker, before they
come actual and personal transgressors, before they know any
ing of moral good or evil, or can come into a state of trial.
the very youngest hours of life, before children can be said
perform rational actions, or to commit actual sins, they are
bject to a thousand miseries: which shews them to be a race
beings out of favour with their Maker, and under his dis-
easure even from their birth: For can we think a God of per-
t goodness, wisdom and equity, would bring such infant-beings
to existence, to feel such calamities in the complete innocence
spotless nature?

What anguish and pain are infants sometimes exposed to,
en as they are coming into the world, and as soon as they are
tered into it? What agonies await their birth? What nu-
erous and acute maladies, what deplorable diseases are ready
attack them? What gripes, what convulsions of nature,
hat cutting anguish, what pangs and inward torments, which
ing some of them down to death, as soon as they have seen
e light of this world a few hours or days? And if they sur-
ve the first three or four months of danger, what unknown
rture do they find in the breeding of their teeth, and other
aladies of infancy, which can be told only by shrieks and tears,
d that for whole days and nights together, while they are
gering on the very borders of death? What additional pains
d sorrows do they sustain sometimes by the negligence or po-
rty of their mothers, and by the cruelty of nurses? What sore
uises and unhappy injuries, whereby many of them are brought
wn to the grave, either on a sudden, or by slow and painful
grees?

Do we not shudder with a sort of sympathy and compas-
n, when we read of children falling into the fire, and lying
ere in helpless screams till their limbs are burned off, or their
es expire in the flames? Or when they drop into scalding
sels of some boiling liquid, whereby they resign their souls in

extreme anguish? Are not all our tenderest powers shocked and pained when we hear of infants left on their couches, or in their cradles, by poor parents for a hour or two, while dogs or hogs have gnawed off their flesh from their bones, and they have been found in dying agonies and blood? And what shall we say of whole nations in older times, or the Hottentots in our age, who expose their children in the woods when they cannot or will not maintain them, to be torn and devoured by any savage beast tha passes by? Are these little young creatures counted perfectly innocent and guiltless in the eyes of that God, who by his providence leaves them to be exposed to so dismal a fate?

Add to all this the common calamities in which these infants are involved, when fires, or earthquakes, or pestilence rage through a whole town or city, and multitudes of them being helpless perish with extreme pain. And there are a thousand other accidents that attend these little creatures, whereby their members or their natural powers receive dismal injuries, and perhaps they drag on life with blindness, deafness, lameness or distortion of body or limbs; sometimes they languish on to manhood, and sometimes to old age, under miseries and sore calamities, which began almost as soon as their being, and which are only ended by death.

Now as these sorrows and death cannot be sent upon them, in a way of correction for their personal and actual sins, for they have none, so neither are they sent for the trial of their virtue, or as any part of a moral state of probation; for they have no reason in exercise, no knowledge of good and evil, and are incapable of virtue, as well as vice, or any moral probation in their early infancy and state of ignorance; yet we see multitudes of these little miserable beings; and are they treated as the innocent harmless creatures of a God of love and compassion? Amidst all these surrounding scenes of danger and distress, do they look like young favourites of heaven? Or rather, do they not seem to be a little sort of criminals under some general curse and punishment?

If mankind had stood in their original innocence, surely their infant offspring would have entered into the world under some general word of blessing. The God who made the first parents of mankind must certainly have blessed them, in several other respects, as well as in saying, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth*; Gen. i. 28. And their infants would have been born like little young angels, ever easy and smiling in a perfection of innocence, and in circumstances of pleasure: And they would have grown up by many little efforts of goodness to the fuller knowledge and love of their Maker, and the practice of every virtue, surrounded with the comforts and satisfactions

of an infant state, and guarded from every mischief by a kind and watchful providence.

But alas, the case of children is quite the reverse of this purity and peace. Survey the dangers and miseries just mentioned, and say, are these provided to receive young angels just entering into being? Were these maladies and griefs and groans prepared to seize a race of little angels coming into our world? If seraphs and cherubs had been made to propagate in our manner, would the great and good God have provided such scenes of pain and peril, disease and death, to have met their young blooming offspring at the very gates of life, and to have attended them all their way, or would he have sent them so soon, and in such vast multitudes, to death and darkness? Would God have ever appointed a race of infant angels to have entered into being in the midst of such infelicities, and have sent more than half of them to destruction again, before they arrived at the exercise of their intellectual powers, or had seen or done, or enjoyed any thing worth living for? Yet this is the wretched case of the offspring of mankind in every generation.

It has been objected here, that these sufferings of children may be for the correction and punishment of the sins of their parents. But the answer is evident, viz. Can a God of equity and justice inflict such sufferings on children without any such constitution whereby the sins of parents may be, as it were, translated, or imputed to the children, as I have shewn in the following parts of this book? Besides, many of the parents of these suffering children may be dead, or absent, so as never to know it; How can it then be a correction or punishment for their parents' sin, any other ways than as it is a general punishment for the sin of their first parent?

I know some have pretended to account for all these calamities of the infant race of mankind, by saying roundly, that God rewards them sufficiently in another world for a few years pain here, when he takes them to heaven. But I answer, Are all children which die secured of heaven, either by reason or scripture? If the infant seed of Abraham and his pious followers, are taken to dwell with God, as their God, are the children of wicked parents as happy too? Are you sure they are not subject to any pains hereafter? Or that their souls are not annihilated at death? And upon either of these suppositions there is no recompence for the pains they suffer.

Besides, a multitude of these grow up to mature years, and if they should prove wicked at last, and be sent to hell, what recompence have they for their infant-sufferings? Or will you say, that God actually punished them before they had sinned, and while they were innocent, because he knew before-hand they would sin? Is this God's way of dealing with his creatures?

Doth reason, or doth scripture give us any hint of this kind? And yet further, how can any creature know what they are punished for? And what wise or good design can this their punishment obtain, when no creature can know what they are punished for in their infancy, if it be not for some universal degeneracy of all the race? But because I would answer all the objections I can think of which have the appearance of reason, I would proceed in this work.

Against all these representations of human infelicity and misery, in older or younger years, perhaps, some persons may make this remonstrance: Is not the great God infinite in goodness? Do not *his tender mercies* spread *over all his works?* Does not that Moses, the Jewish law-giver, who has been cited and called to attest the miseries of man, does he not represent *God* as *merciful and gracious, abundant in goodness?* Ex. xxxiv. 6. How is this consistent with such miseries reigning among his creatures? I answer, If we consider mankind as a sinful degenerate part of God's creation, it is most abundant goodness that they have any comforts left, and that their miseries are not doubled: Now Moses and the Jewish writers do consider mankind as fallen from God, and so his goodness is evident in a thousand instances; though it must be confessed there are also thousands of instances of his just hatred of sin, and his righteous punishments scattered all around this world among all nations and all ages of men.

Some have been so weak as to reckon up a large catalogue of the instances of divine bounty and goodness in this lower world, and add thereto the revelation and proposal of his saving grace; and they would make this as evident a proof that mankind stands in the favour of God, as all the other instances of the miseries of human life can be any proof of an universal degeneracy of men, and the anger of God against them. But it is very easy to reply, That the goodness of God may incline him to bestow a thousand bounties and graces upon criminals and their whole race: But I think his justice and goodness will not suffer him to inflict miseries in such an universal manner, where there has been no sin to deserve them, either in parents or children, in head or members, in themselves or their representative, as will appear in what follows hereafter; but I would not anticipate my design, and bring in this before its time.

XI. If we collect and put together all these scenes of iniquity, folly, and wretchedness, even among the better sort of men, as well as the worst, and that even in younger years, as well as in more advanced age, and take a survey of them in their total sum, it is sufficiently evident that creatures lying in such sinful and miserable circumstances, disobedient to

God and under his displeasure, are not such as they came out of the hands of their Creator, who is *wise and righteous, holy and good.* His wisdom, which is all harmony and order, would never suffer him to frame such a vast multitude, such a whole species of beings under such wild and innumerable disorders both natural and moral: His holiness would never permit him to create beings with such innate and powerful principles of iniquity; nor would his infinite goodness allow him to produce a whole rank and order of creatures in such circumstances of pain, agony, torment and death, if they were to be esteemed his pure, innocent and holy workmanship, just come out of his sacred hands. Can we ever reasonably suppose, that the holy and blessed God would originally design and frame a whole world of intelligent and rational creatures in such circumstances, as that every one of them coming into being, according to the laws of nature, in long successive ages, in different climates, of different tempers and constitutions, under different influences, having greater or lesser advantages for wisdom, virtue, and happiness; and in ten thousand thousand different stations and conditions of life: I say, can we suppose that they should all break the laws of their reason, and defile themselves with sin in greater or less degrees, should all feel their appetites and passions so often contrary to reason, and yet prevailing over it, that they should all so far offend against their Maker, *all become guilty in his sight,* and be all exposed more or less to his displeasure, to pain and misery, and mortality, without one single instance or exception that we know of to the contrary? If mankind were such creatures as God at first made them, can we suppose that not one man among so many millions, should make so right and proper an use of his reason and conscience as to avoid sin and death? Can we think, that this should be the universal consequent of their original state and constitution, as they are framed by the hand of a wise, and holy, and merciful God? This, I say, is such an absurd thing, as no reasonable man can suppose. Surely *God made man upright* and happy, and all these mischiefs could never come directly from our Creator's hand. Perhaps, here it may be objected again,

That this universal condemnation of mankind, as it were, by wholesale, and laying them all under such a charge of guilt and wretchedness without exception, is more than our experience or observation will allow. It is acknowledged that many are now guilty, and many are miserable, though they were born innocent, and not degenerate: but still a far greater part of men have more moral good than evil in them, and have more pleasure than they have pain; and therefore upon the whole, mankind must not be pronounced *a sinful and a miserable* being;

And if God has appointed such a constitution as is best in the whole view of things, and is favourable to the majority of the human race, or the bulk of the world; this is sufficient to vindicate the justice of God; and then the few sufferers have no reason to complain. Do we not find it thus under the best of human laws and constitutions, that some persons who were once innocent will grow wicked? And that even some innocent persons may be laid under unavoidable hardships or sufferings? Yet all law-givers account those to be just constitutions, which provide for the welfare of the bulk of the subjects, though here and there will be an unhappy instance of guilt and misery. To this objection I would offer these three answers:

1. In order to pronounce a man miserable, it is granted he must have more pain than pleasure; but in order to pronounce a man a sinner, there is no necessity that his moral evil should exceed his good, or his vices transcend his virtues. If a man had a hundred virtues, one vice in the sight of God would pronounce him a criminal; one evil action would break the law of his Maker, and lay him under his Maker's just displeasure. *He that keeps* almost *all the law of God, and offends in one point*, affronts that authority which requires all obedience: So that all the race of man are certainly under this condemnation, that they are sinners every one of them: and, consequently, exposed to the anger of him that made them. And thus with regard to their sinfulness my argument stands in full force.

As for misery, let it be allowed for the present, though it is by no means granted, that there are many persons whose pleasures exceed their uneasinesses; yet it is certain that there are great numbers also of mankind, whose pains or uneasinesses, wisely and justly compared with their pleasures, will appear far to exceed them; and it is hard to say, how this should come to pass, if mankind were all innocent and happy by nature, as they are now born into the world. Their universal sinfulness therefore, and the misery of multitudes, must conclude them all under some spreading degeneracy.

2. What though the makers of human laws are not able to frame such constitutions in every case, which shall certainly secure happiness to all the innocent? This is because their narrow views of things, and their short foresight of future events, will not enable them in making laws to provide against all future inconveniences, nor to secure the innocent always from injury: But we must not think nor speak thus of the divine Law-giver, the Creator and the Governor of all things: He grasps at once all possibles, as well as all futures, in his present view, and and therefore he can guard against any injury that might befall innocent beings; nor will divine justice, in my opinion, suffer *any mischief* to light upon any individual innocent without equal

recompence, for *the Judge of all the earth will do right*; Gen. xviii. 25.

3. Though the bulk of mankind in the present constitution of things could be proved to be happy, by their pleasures exceeding their pains, yet this gives no manner of satisfaction to any one individual, who suffers misery under the same constitution without any demerit. Every intelligent and innocent individual has the same right to his Maker's regard in point of justice, as if there were no other creature but he: And the advantage or happiness of the majority is no reason at all, why any one innocent individual should suffer any injury or injustice by the constitution which God has made. And therefore if God had constituted any thing in his creation or providence, which would bring the least injury, or unjust pain or loss on any individual, sensible, or intelligent being entirely innocent, I think his justice would oblige him to interpose, and to prevent that injury, or to compensate it with some superior good. If any one therefore, whether man or child, among the race of mortals, and especially if a considerable number of them, have more pain than pleasure, they must be supposed to be involved in some guilt, or some fatal degeneracy, which may give just occasion to their misery.

XII. To give a little further force to this argument, after the survey of all these pains, sorrows, and miseries, let us consider what poor, low, sorry pleasures the bulk of mankind are in pursuit of, to relieve them under this train of wretchedness, and then ask, whether these are suited to a race of intelligent and innocent creatures? Let us stoop down a moment and cast a glance at the sports of children, from five to fifteen years of age; what have all these little toys and fooleries in them, that would be fit for young angels dressed in flesh and blood? Would so many years of early life have been wasted in such mean and trifling diversions by a race of holy and rational beings? And how much early iniquity and mischief in thought, word, and action, is mingled with these sportings among the younger tribes of mankind, God only knows.

As for the manly years of life, what are the greatest parts of the delights of men, but either foolish and irrational satisfactions, or downright sinful? What are the pleasures of the rich and the great, to relieve them under the common sorrows of life? If it be not profuse luxury and intemperance, which is often the case, yet is it not grandeur and magnificence, furniture and equipage, finery of dress and gay appearances, whereby they take a pride to shew themselves superior to the rest of their species? And when they shine in silks of various dye, and blaze amidst the splendour of gold and jewels; this is the vain satisfaction of most of them, to look down upon their

Now is it possible, if we were a race of pure and innocent beings made for immortality, in some other world, that God should suffer the bulk of mankind to remain so ignorant and thoughtless of that future state into which we are all hastening? Would a good and gracious God leave a race of such creatures as he made them, in such a stupid insensibility of their eternal interests, so unsuited to the felicities of an immortal spirit, and so negligent of all preparations for them? Should some blessed angel of heaven, who had never known any thing of our earth, come down amongst us, or some inhabitant of an innocent globe, some stranger to our world, descend from one of God's holy dominions on high, and spend a month or two in a survey of all the iniquities and miseries of the tribes of mankind, can we imagine he would pronounce us holy or happy? Could he ever believe the holy and wise, the righteous and the gracious God ever put such workmanship as we are out of his hands for new-made creatures? Would he not immediately conclude, there are so many signs of guilt and wretchedness among us, as constrain him to confess some universal degeneracy and desolation fallen upon us, which is utterly unknown to the holy and happy provinces of the empire of the blessed God?

Upon this whole survey, I think our own reason must needs join in the same mournful confession, that some universal apostacy from the laws of our creation, some criminal disorder and wretchedness has some way or other come upon the whole race of mankind, since they first came out of the hands of their Maker: There must be some spreading poison which has tainted our nature, which renders us so prone to sin, and so lamentably guilty, so miserable in the present state, so thoughtless of the future, and so unprepared for it. There must be some general revolt of the race of man from their Creator, whereby they have disturbed, disordered, and broken their original natures and powers, whereby they have ruined their innocence and their peace, and raised a most unhappy empire of tyrannical and vexing passions upon the ruin of them; whereby they have provoked the anger of their kind, wise and holy Maker, and their righteous Governer, and whereby they become exposed to such wretched circumstances even in their infancy and childhood, as well as when they grow to years of greater understanding: I think it is evident that a righteous and wise Governor, even though we should not consider his infinite goodness, would not suffer creatures to come into such deplorable circumstances, if they were not regarded by him in some sort as criminals: He would not inflict so much natural evil, that is, pain and misery, and spread it through such a vast province of his dominion, so universally *without* exception, nor suffer it to be inflicted in the course of his

providence, if it were not with a regard to some general moral evil, that is, sin.

Will some persons again complain, that in representing the sorrows and miseries of mankind, I have here acted the part of a satyrist rather than of a philosopher, and have summed together all the pains, mischiefs and distresses of human life without giving a due place to the pleasures and delights of it, or bringing them into the account? I confess that the great God hath furnished this world, which is the habitation of man, with multitudes of grateful and pleasing objects, to regale his senses, to feast his appetites, and to excite his most agreeable passions, which might have been part of his happiness in a state of innocence. But now the unreasonable strength and violent efforts of these appetites, the sinful bent and bias of his will, together with the weak resistance against vicious excesses which is made by his reason and conscience, turn every one of these pleasures into real dangers and snares. There are but few who indulge these delights without dishonouring their nature, defiling their souls with sin, and breaking the laws of God; and in the midst of so degenerate a state, their most tempting satisfactions and delights do in a great measure lose the nature of good or benefit, because of their constant danger of plunging men into guilt and misery.

Shall I be told again, that there are multitudes of men, whose easy and peaceful circumstances are much superior to their troubles and sorrows, and these would upon the whole be pronounced happy, even if there were no future state? Though I have answered this already, by shewing that the happiness of the major part does not vindicate that constitution which leaves any individuals under misery without some original demerit, yet I will answer here more directly, That if the greatest part of men could see things in their true light, as God and angels regard them, surely the bulk of the world would be found on the miserable side, whatever particular exceptions might be found among individuals: And this in general would teach us that the inhabitants of this world are not a race of happy beings, such as they would have been, if they had been innocent, or such as they were when they came first out of the hands of their Maker? But the inference of our wretchedness or ruin, may be pronounced with much more strength and universality concerning this world, if we join the sins and the miseries of mankind together. If we unite in one view all the criminal as well as the painful circumstances which I have represented in these foregoing propositions, I think it must be granted, that there is some universal ruin and degeneracy spread all over human nature, and every individual helps to complete this mournful sentence, and confirm the truth of it, that *man is a sinful and unhappy being.*

And methinks, when I take my justest survey of this lower world, with all the inhabitants of it, I can look upon it no otherwise than as a huge and magnificent structure in ruins, and turned into a prison and a lazar-house or hospital, wherein lie millions of criminals and rebels against their Creator, under condemnation to misery and death; who are at the same time sick of a mortal distemper, and disordered in their minds, even to distraction: Hence proceed those infinite follies and vices which are continually practised here, and the righteous anger of an offended God is visible in ten thousand instances. Yet there are proclamations of divine grace, health, and life sounding amongst them, either with a louder voice or in gentler whispers, though very few of them take any notice thereof. But out of this great prison, this infirmary, there is, here and there, one who is called powerfully by divine grace, and attends to the offers of reconciliation, and complies with the proposals of peace: His sins are pardoned, he is healed of his worst distemper; and though his body is appointed to go down to the dust for a season, yet his soul is taken upwards to a region of blessedness, while the bulk of these miserable and guilty inhabitants perish in their own wilful madness, and by the just executions of divine anger. Before I finish this general head I would ask leave to make one remark, and that is,

What an unreasonable thing is it to deny this doctrine of the universal depravity and corruption of mankind, and renounce it in every degree, when it appears so evident to our eyes, and to our ears, and to our daily and constant observation and experience in so many thousand instances? Is it not almost like winking against the light, since the premises are so strong and glaring, and the inference so powerfully demands our assent? I must profess, that with all the diligence and impartiality with which I am capable of reviewing what I have written on this universal degeneracy of mankind, I am not conscious that I have made a false representation of this matter, or aggravated it beyond truth. The innumerable miseries, follies and madness of mankind, which in various forms strike our eyes, our ears, and our thoughts from day to day, confirm my sentiments of the doctrine of some *original and universal fall of man from the purity and glory of his creation.*

And what is the chief temptation that leads some men to deny this doctrine? Is it not because they cannot give a satisfactory account how to solve some of the difficulties that attend it? Many of the heathen philosophers believed it from their own experience, and their daily survey of mankind, though they were utterly at a loss how to account for it: And what if we could never assign any sufficient and satisfactory reason and *cause for it,* or shew how this spreading degeneracy begun, or

ow it came to take place so universally amongst men? What we are perplexed and still at a loss to satisfy our own enuiries, how all this guilt and mischief came upon us; must e therefore deny what we see, and hear, and feel daily?

Can we account for all the secret things in the creation of od, in the world of meteors and minerals, the vegetables of e field, or the brutes of the earth, or the animal body of an? Does any man refuse to believe that the infinite variety plants and flowers in all their beauteous colours and forms ow up out of the same dark and dirty soil, because he doth t know all the secret springs of their vegetation? Do men oubt of the truth of a loadstone's drawing iron to itself, and aking a needle point to the north, because they cannot find out e way of its operation? Are we not sure that our food nouhes our bodies, and medicines relieve our pains, though we e utterly at a loss to tell all the ferments and motions of those oms by which our nourishment is performed, or our diseases aled? Can we account for all the darknesses, and appearg difficulties and confusions among the events of providence? an we discover all the reasons of the wise conduct of God nong his creatures? No surely, we cannot pretend to it: nd yet since these matters of fact, and these events are obous to all our senses, do we deny and refuse to believe ese things which are evident in creation and providence, and hich are communicated to us by so many springs and mediums knowledge, merely because we cannot account for the original id secret causes or reasons of them? Or because we cannot concile some crossing appearances, and jarring apprehensions at attend them? Why then should this universal degeneracy id ruin of human nature be denied, though we cannot remove ery objection that attends it? And yet if we will search faithlly into the causes and springs of this matter, so far as our itural reason, assisted by the light of revelation, will enable us, e may hope to find some solution of those hard questions, which ay give a degree of satisfaction to humble and modest minds, ough perhaps not sufficient to silence every curious and unreanable cavil.

UEST. II.—*How came this general Degeneracy, Vice, and Misery, to overspread Mankind in all Nations and in all Ages?*

To find a complete and satisfactory answer to this enquiry not a very easy thing. It was a vexing question among the *cient schools of the* heathen philosophers, whence evil came

first among mankind? And though they had many guesses and loose conjectures, yet none of them could give an account of this matter, to satisfy the minds of studious men. And if we should not hit upon such a solution of this difficulty now, as may on every side make all things lie quite straight and easy, yet if we can but propose a way to solve it, which may maintain the honour of God, and justify his conduct in a good degree, we may expect the reader should be candid in his censures, where the matter of fact is so evident, and yet the manner of accounting for it is so difficult that it has employed the wisdom of great and learned men in all ages with so doubtful a success. To find an answer to this question, we shall not immediately run into revelation and scripture; though doubtless, we have the most certain and satisfactory account of it given us there; yet since what the scripture says of this matter is so short, and is to be derived chiefly from the third chapter of the book of Genesis, and the fifth chapter to the Romans, and from some few other general hints that are scattered up and down in the bible, let us try whether we cannot by a train of reasonings, with a little help from scripture, find out some clue that will lead us into the spring and original of this sinful and miserable state; and afterward we will enquire whether or no this very clue of reasoning, this track of guilt and misery, be not the same which scripture more directly points out to us, and strongly confirms by all its sacred and divine discoveries on this subject. In order to trace out this matter by reasoning, let us begin according to the following propositions:

I. This general degeneracy of mankind, so far as I can judge, can come upon them but by one of these three ways: either, 1. That the souls of all men existed in a former state, and sinned against their Maker there, and are sent to dwell in bodies in this world, attended with such unhappy circumstances of sin and misery, either as a natural consequent of, or as a punishment for their former sins in some other world. Or, 2. That one original parent of them all sinned against his Maker, and sustained the miseries consequent upon it in his own person first, and when he became a father, he spread a sinful and miserable nature through all his race and offspring by mere propagation. Or, 3. Some original person stood before God, as a common federal head and representative of mankind, upon condition of bringing happiness or misery on all the race according as he behaved, well or ill; and *through his disobedience*, sin and misery came upon all whose head he was, or whom he represented. If the two first will not solve the difficulty, we shall be constrained to take in the last. Let us see how far each will go.

II. This present wretched state of things, could not arise from

the particular personal sin of all single souls in a former state before they came into this world: This present universal misery and wretchedness, could never be appointed as a punishment to us for our former personal offences against our Maker, for we know nothing of any such former state or former offences; we have not the least idea or remembrance of it: Now personal guilt cannot be properly punished by the all-knowing and just God, where the sinner has no consciousness nor remembrance of the crime. There must be the same mind, the same spirit, the same intelligent self or person, conscious both of the past personal sin, and of the present punishment, to make it appear to be a proper instance of the anger of God for their sin; otherwise the ends of personal punishment cannot be answered, sinning creatures will not be made to see the justice of their punisher, nor can they condemn themselves as justly deserving such misery. Without this consciousness and remembrance, all our miseries would be nothing but afflictive evils brought on us by our Creator, not as personal criminals, but as mere creatures, and consequently not agreeable to the goodness and equity of a God.

III. If this sinful and miserable condition of men cannot be supposed to arise from their own personal sins in a pre-existent state, we may enquire then in the next place, whether it may not be derived from some original parent of our race, who sinning against God, lost his own innocence, and therewith lost his habit or principles of virtue and goodness; he was exposed to the displeasure of his Maker, and fell under just and grievous miseries.

Such a primitive sinner, if he proceeded to propagate his offspring according to the common rules or laws of nature, must communicate to them such a sinful nature as he had himself, and they will stand exposed to the natural effects of his sin, as well as to all following penal miseries for their own sins. The same irregular ferments of flesh and blood, and such corrupt appetites and vicious passions, will be found in them also; which still grew stronger before the young creatures grew up, so far as to exercise their reason. And when by degrees they came *to know good and evil*, and to be capable of actual sin, these vicious propensities did generally, if not always, overcome their rational faculties, did prevail upon their wills to a frequent actual compliance, and led them away effectually to sin against their Maker, and so to expose themselves more and more to his displeasure, and to confirm their own habits of sin. And thus every one of the race of man, in their successive seasons of life, might become personally vicious, or deprived of the holy image of God, by their descending from vicious parents, and were deprived of the favour of God by their own actual compliances with these vicious pro-

pensities of nature, that is, by actual iniquities. I think it may be granted, that this supposition will solve the difficulty in some measure, and will go a great way toward an answer to the present enquiry.

IV. But still this in my opinion seems hardly sufficient to account for the miseries which come upon children from their very birth, for the pains and agonies, and dying groans, and death itself in their infant state, before they are capable of knowing or *doing good and evil*, or of committing actual sins: And the reason I give for my opinion is this; these tendencies or propensities towards evil in the infant state, even though the soul or will complies with them, while there is no possible knowledge of a law or duty, can hardly be called actual sins: Nor can children, while incapable of proper virtue or vice, merit such pains and agonies of themselves as they often suffer. And I can scarce suppose they would be thus punished or tormented by a righteous or wise Governor in their infant age, when they cannot possibly commit actual sin, nor have any knowledge of good or evil, merely upon the account of the necessary propagation of a sinful nature to them from their parents, since they come into this state by that original law of creation and propagation, which a kind and wise Creator appointed to his innocent creatures. I cannot account for their being treated as sinners, unless they were some way involved in guilt or sin, as soon as they are born: And I do not see how this can be, unless they have* sin some way imputed to them by their interest in, and communion with some common federal head, surety or representative, who hath actually sinned.

V. I might add also, that this natural propagation of sinful inclinations from a common parent by a law of creation, seems difficult to be reconciled with the justice and goodness of God, unless we suppose that some such legal or federal guilt and condemnation came upon the race of man by the misbehaviour of a common surety or head. It seems exceeding hard to suppose that such a righteous and holy God the Creator, who is also a

* By "sin or guilt imputed," I do not mean that any thing or action really faulty, is charged by way of accusation on the persons of infants, as though they hereby become personally faulty or blameable, or that the very acts of sin are transferred so as to make them proper sinners or criminals; but I mean that the children of some first man may be by a righteous covenant, so far esteemed one with their parent when he sinned, as to be in some sense, involved with him in his state of condemnation, and liable to the miseries that proceed from it. This I have made to appear at large in the plainest light, in a short appendix or dissertation on "Imputed Sin and Righteousness;" and I desire all my expressions in this book may be construed in a consistency with this remark, and with that dissertation at the end of the book. The arguments therefore which are brought against this doctrine, from the impossibility or the injustice of imputing the very actions of one man to another, have no force, since I have so often declared in that essay, that actions are not properly transferred by imputation, but the legal result of those actions.

being of such infinite goodness, should by a powerful law and order of creation, which is now called nature, appoint young intelligent creatures to come into being in such unhappy and degenerate circumstances, liable to such intense pains and miseries, and under such powerful tendencies and propensities to evil by the mere law of propagation, as should almost unavoidably expose them to ten thousand actual sins as they grow up, if they were not born under some judicial sentence of God as a governor on the account of moral evil or sin; which moral evil must be before committed, either by themselves or by some representative. It is hard to suppose, that the creating power and decree of God, or his law of nature for propagation, should place mankind in such a situation as to render them unavoidably sinful and miserable in a degree, before they have any personal sin or guilt to deserve it, unless you suppose them to be some way interested or involved in something of guilt or sin, which was derived from a common head, surety or representative, who might be appointed by some wise and righteous constitution to act for them*.

VI. Upon the whole view of things therefore, I know not how to resolve this difficulty, but by supposing this universal sinfulness and misery of our whole species, to arise from the sin and guilt of some person, who was both a primitive parent or natural fountain of our race, and who was also set up as a common head or legal representative of all mankind: And that he by sinning against his Maker, lost his own principles of virtue and goodness, exposed himself and his posterity, whom he naturally produced, and whom he legally represented, to the displeasure of his Maker, and so brought sin and misery into the very nature of man, and spread or conveyed this sin or misery through all his offspring.

I must confess I am not fond of such a scheme or hypothesis, of deriving some sort of guilt from a surety or representative, though I know it has been embraced by a considerable party of christians ancient and modern. No; I would gladly renounce it, because of some great difficulties attending it, if I could find any other way to relieve the much greater difficulties and harder imputations upon the conduct of divine providence, which will attend this enquiry, if we follow any other track of sentiments.

* If it could be well made out, that the whole race of mankind are partakers of sinful inclinations and evil passions and biasses to vice, and also are exposed to many sharp actual sufferings, and to death, merely and only by the original divine law of their propagation from their parents, who had sinned; and if the justice and goodness of God could be vindicated in making and maintaining such a dreadful law or order of propagation through six thousand years; we have no need of further enquiries, but might here be at rest. But if such a scheme be so injurious to the goodness and equity of God, as it seems to be, then we are constrained to seek a little further for a satisfactory account of this universal degeneracy and misery of mankind.

Nor do I see any way how to avoid or escape these perplexities, if we abandon this supposition of a common head or representative of mankind, who may be supposed according to a just constitution to involve his posterity together with himself in a state of guilt and misery. Is it not much easier, to suppose that God looks upon these young creatures not as innocent or guiltless, but as some way involved or interested in sin or guilt, when in the very original course of nature which he appointed, he brings them into being in such miserable circumstances, and so exposed to sin as well as pain? I say, is it not much easier to suppose, that they are looked on as some way under guilt and condemnation, than that the appointment and providence of a good and holy God should bring them hourly into being, in the midst of such sinful and miserable circumstances, and punish them with such early pains and sorrows, while he looks upon them as perfectly innocent and guiltless?

The fact is evident. The great God, who is both just and good, has appointed and continues such a law of propagation, whereby millions of infants without any personal sin or fault of their own are brought into being under these wretched circumstances, inclined to sin, and liable to a thousand sorrows and pains, and death. This is plain and certain fact, beyond all reasonable doubt or contest: Now will not the equity or justice, and the goodness of God be much better vindicated by supposing some original and righteous constitution*, whereby these young creatures are some way involved in the guilt or sin of their original parent and representative, and so made liable to misery, than by supposing them to be entirely innocent without any charge of imputed sin, and yet brought into being daily by the God of nature, in a condition of such proneness to sin, and exposed to such miseries? And as the glorious and holy nature and actions of God are best vindicated by such a supposition, so without it I cannot well explain the scriptural account of this matter in that one short sentence; Rom. v. 12. *By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*; that is, *sin is imputed*, or, which is much one in St. Paul's language, *death, the penalty of sin, has passed on all, or has reigned over all*, and therefore all are esteemed in some sort as guilty and condemned in the sight of God, though *they did not sin after the similitude of Adam's transgression*, that is, they did not commit actual personal sin against a known law as Adam did §. But I give but a single hint in this place, because I have reserved the scriptural account for another part of the discourse.

* The righteousness of this constitution appears plain in propositions V. and VI. under question III. and section II. in question IV.

§ I confess that it is from scripture I derive my sentiments on this subject, and I firmly believe this doctrine of the imputation of sin from Adam to all his *offspring*.

QUEST. III.—*How could a holy, a wise, and a righteous God, who is also a Being of infinite Goodness, establish such a Constitution, that all Mankind should derive their Being from such a natural Parent and legal Representative, whereby such universal Sinfulness and Misery should in the Event, be spread through all human Nature in all following Ages?*

Answer. If this constitution was not only in itself a wise and a righteous thing in the universal Creator and Governor of the world, but if it was also the effect of goodness in God, as an universal Father of his intelligent creatures, then surely we shall silence all our censures of it at once. If it was a more probable way, so far as we can see, to secure the continuance of man and his whole race in the image and favour of his Maker, though it happened to have a contrary event by the negligence and faulty conduct of the first man, yet I say, it was a more proper and probable means to secure man in his happiness, then all must confess that this original constitution doth not impeach the holiness, justice or goodness of God. Now let us enter into particulars, and enquire whether this constitution be not only *just and holy*, but also good and kind, and most proper and likely to secure innocent man: Perhaps this will appear in the following propositions:

I. God created man an intelligent and holy creature, but capable of mistake and sin; a compound being made up of flesh and spirit, or an animal and a mind, with power also to propagate his kind in long successive generations. Now that this could not be unjust, will appear by particulars.—1. There is no injustice in God in creating such a being as man, a creature capable of mistaking and capable of sinning. What if man was formed with intellectual powers inferior to those of an angel? Let him remember that even an angel is capable of mistake and sin also: Nor has man any reason to complain that he was not made an angel; for by the same reason an angel might complain that he was not an archangel: And this sort of unreasonable complaint might upon the same foot have run through all lower orders of being, and would have laid a restraint upon God the Creator, from making any lower ranks of intelligent creatures whatsoever. According to this way of arguing, God would never have manifested the rich variety of his wisdom in the various ranks and degrees of creatures; for no rank of beings but the uppermost could ever have been formed. Nay, it may be doubted, according to this way of arguing, whether any creature at all could be formed: For perhaps the highest creature considered merely in his own natural powers might be capable of mistake and defect in duty. But if it be not an unfit or improper thing for an almighty God to make any creature, it is not unfit

for him to make a fallible creature, and capable of some defect, though he was originally perfect. And since he is a God of infinite wisdom, he thought it very becoming his character to manifest this infinitely various wisdom in the formation of a vast variety of ranks of beings, some of which should have higher and nobler intellectual powers, and should be further out of the reach of temptation and mistake, and others of them of lower or meaner intellectual powers, and more within the danger of mistake and temptation. Now this carries no injustice with it, provided that every rank of beings has a sufficient power to guard against its dangers of mistaking, and against the assaults of the temptations to which it might be exposed.

2. Nor was it unjust in God to unite an animal body to this rational mind; for by this union there is a rich variety of new powers arising in that creature, such as sense, appetite, passion, together with all the sensible qualities of colours, sounds, tastes, smells, &c. and the government of animal engines by a mind, all which manifest the various and astonishing riches of divine wisdom in the contriving of such a wondrous creature as man. And if it should be objected, That the mind or spirit is exposed to some temptations by reason of this union with animal nature, let it be remembered, that the innocent spirit or rational principle was formed in a state of power and dominion over all the appetites and passions that arise from flesh and blood; and had abundant capacity to resist all these temptations, while reason maintained its superior post in which it was created, and it did govern sense, appetite and passion. And besides, if there are some supposed inconveniences attending a spirit united to an animal body, so there are many certain advantages arising from it in the innocent state. The spirit is hereby made capable of tasting all the pleasures of sense, and of the more boundless power of imagination, and making use of the additional powers or organs of the animal, viz. eyes, ears, tongue, hands, &c. and all the vigorous efforts of the better passions, for the discharge of its duty, for the honour of its God, for the benefit of its fellow-creatures, and for the happiness of itself.

3. There could be no injustice in appointing such a creature to propagate its own kind by marriage, and to furnish it with all proper powers for that purpose: For if man continued in innocence, he would then enjoy all the innocent pleasures of numerous society, and some of those too springing from himself in every age, together with all the tender and endeared sentiments and delights of sons and daughters, and as Milton expresses it,

> "Relations dear, and all the charities
> Of father, son and brother,"

which would greatly add to the happiness of his earthly state.

II. Though man was created with powers inferior to some other intellectual beings, yet he was formed *in the image of his Maker*, and in his Maker's favour; in a state of perfect innocence, holiness and peace, with sufficient knowledge to defend and secure him from fatal mistakes, and with sufficient power to resist temptation and to maintain himself in this holy and happy state: But at the same time he was furnished with a liberty of will, that is, with a power *to chuse good or evil*, to disobey his Maker, as well as obey him, to use his understanding well in governing his sense, appetite and passion, or to abuse his understanding, and darken and weaken it by giving the reins to sensuality and his meaner powers: he had a liberty or free-will to watch against temptation or to be negligent, to resist it or to comply with it, to abide in the favour and image of his Maker, or to fall from his Maker's image and favour, according as he should use his liberty well or ill.

Now here is no injustice, nor any want of goodness in making man a free creature: For it is by this freedom that he becomes capable of moral government: It is this that renders him a proper subject of rewards, if he maintains his virtue and obeys his Maker; and it gives him a power of advancing himself by his obedience in his Maker's love: And it is this liberty also that renders him a proper subject of punishment if he neglect his watch, and turn aside to the paths of vice and disobedience.

III. Innocent man had probably some privileges given him by divine favour, above what were necessary and due to the mere state of his creation, viz. he might be indulged to converse with his Maker, perhaps in a visible manner, and to receive special and peculiar communications from him: He might be situated in a place of very great pleasure, with all varieties of tasteful food, and other instruments and objects for his refreshment and delight, and with encouragements to hope, and assurances to expect, that if he continued always humbly dependent upon God, and ever watchful against temptation, and attentive to his duty, he should have strong divine aids in case of danger, upon his application to his Maker for them. This is a very reasonable supposition, derived from the weakness of man, the fallibility of his nature, and from the abounding goodness of his Maker.

IV. Man was not only by the constitution of his nature put under a law of obedience to God his Maker, in whatsoever he should require of him, but also he might have that law set before him in some more express manner, together with the penalty or threatening annexed to it, viz. *If thou obeyest not thy God in the duty which reason requires, thou shalt surely lose thy present privileges, and life itself.* Now this ought to have been a constant and powerful guard to him against all temptations, if he

had the command and the threatening so expressly set before him.

V. There is also abundant reason to believe, that he had not only a law given him with a penalty threatened for the breach of it, but also a covenant made with him, and a promise given to him, not only of continuing in his present happiness, but of being immutably confirmed and established in immortality; and perhaps, of enjoying some greater happiness if he continued to obey God, and abstain from sin.

This covenant, indeed, seems to be a matter of pure divine favour, above and beyond what was due to him as a creature: For after he had fulfilled his obedience to the law for many years, and continued in the possession of his present comforts, God considered as an absolute sovereign might have annihilated him, and have done him no wrong, so far as I can judge. The great God is absolute Lord of all, and if we consider only his sovereignty and his justice, he might, I think, have taken away from a creature what he had given him without any injustice at all? So that this covenant of life or promise of immortality, and especially of superior happiness as a reward of his obedience, was the mere effect of divine goodness. And yet we cannot but suppose there was such a covenant made with innocent man, and such a promise of life and even of superior happiness given him upon condition of obedience during his state of trial, if we consider the following things:

1. I might in the first place argue thus: The great goodness of God, so far as it has been manifested in his conduct towards his creatures, seems to plead for it, that man should have some reward of his obedience, some additional gratifications and blessings above the mere continuance of this present life and peace: For it hath not been the way of God in any of his dispensations with the children of men, so far as we can learn from observation or scripture, to set his creatures at work for nothing; 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. God will have the *ox rewarded that treads out the corn by forbidding to muzzle him*, and permitting him to eat, and so he will have his ministers rewarded with a maintenance. Ezek. xxix. 19, 20. *God bestows all the riches and the spoil of Egypt to reward Nebuchadnezzar and his army for the service which they had served against Tyrus, for they wrought for me saith the Lord.* It is described as the known character of God, and what every man is called to believe, *that, he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him:* Heb. xi. 6. And it has been his constant course of transaction with his creatures, to encourage them to duty by the promise of some reward above their present state and circumstances: And if it is thus in our fallen state, why should it not be much rather in the state of innocence?

2. I argue thus: God made the soul of man in its own *nature immortal*: Now if man had continued innocent, and

honoured the law of God with obedience during all his state of trial, man would have acquired some advances in the knowledge of God, some improvement of his nature, and greater resemblance to God, by a more intimate acquaintance and converse with God in his various perfections and works, and some stronger bias to the love of God and to all holiness, which in itself would have been a natural increase of his happiness. Nor is it to be supposed, that the blessed God would have presently contradicted the nature of things, and that connexion of causes and effects which his own wisdom had just established, that is, the connexion of holiness and happiness: Nor can we imagine that he would have forbid the soul of man to be immortal, contrary to its very nature, in order to have put an end to the life and happiness of so holy and so obedient a creature; God always loves holiness so much, that he will reward it where he finds it. And if man with this improvement of his nature had continued immortal, his happiness had been still greater, and that without end.

3. God hath wrought into the nature of man an earnest desire after life or immortality, and also a desire of a perpetual change or novelty of pleasures, and that without the diminution of them. The nature of man would be tired with one everlasting round of the mere repetition of sensible delights, of eating, drinking, sleeping, working, &c. or even of the more refined delights of the mind, if there were no novelty, no fresh scenes of pleasure to open upon him; and yet man could never desire new pleasures should be less than those he enjoyed before. Now since God hath wrought this appetite or desire of immortality, and of fresh delights into the very nature of man, it is highly probable that God who makes nothing in vain, would have raised or translated him to some scenes of higher felicity, and thus gratified this desire which himself had wrought in his innocent creature, after man had paid him so much actual honour and obedience in his state of trial.

4. I might borrow another argument from scripture and the tree of life, which in the New Testament is made a figure of the advanced happiness of heaven, and the joys which the saints shall possess there. Now though it be not expressly revealed at large in so short a history as the third of Genesis, that a blessed immortality should be the reward of Adam's obedience, yet there is much reason to suppose that *the tree of life* could not properly have been any emblem or figure of eternal life under the covenant of grace, if it had not been an emblem, sign, seal, or pledge of this covenant of works, and of this promise which should have made Adam immortal, and unchangeably happy; and that probably in the same way as *the tree of knowledge of good and evil* was made a sign and pledge of the evil that should

come upon him, if he disobeyed his Maker. *Upon the whole therefore, it is highly rational to conclude, that if man had continued innocent, his pleasures would have been increased, and his life immortal.*

VI. This covenant is justly supposed to reach to his posterity, and include his offspring as well as himself in this manner, *viz.* if man continued in his state of obedience, and thereby confirmed or advanced himself in the image and favour of his Maker, and secured immortal life to himself, by his obedience during the appointed time of his trial, he should also propagate his offspring perhaps in that established or advanced degree of the divine image and favour, or at least in the security of immortal life and happiness to them: But if man should bring a sinful taint and vicious disorder upon his nature, and diseases and death upon his animal body, by tasting some forbidden pleasure, and sinning against God, that he should not only lose this image and favour of God himself with all his privileges, but that he should *beget his offspring in his own sinful likeness,* and in his own unhappy circumstances, despoiled of the image and favour of God, and of the privileges which their father enjoyed during his innocency. Now there is no injustice in this appointment: Because life as well as death was contained in the covenant; and the advantages which were to be enjoyed by the obedience of the first man, and his posterity, were as great or greater than the disadvantages which should attend his disobedience.

And as there was no injustice in it, so it may be proved, that it was an instance of divine goodness to mankind: For when one man was set up as a common head of multitudes, he must be supposed to have so much the stronger obligations upon his mind to obedience, in order to preserve and secure the happiness of those multitudes, which should spring from him as well as his own, and which would be involved in his misery, in case he disobeyed. No single person standing the test of obedience to obtain his own single happiness, can be supposed to have an equal motive to diligence and watchfulness, and duty, with that man who was entrusted both with his own welfare, and with the welfare of millions.

And besides, it was a further instance of divine goodness as well as wisdom, to entrust that very man with the fate of mankind, who was to be the father and fountain of all their race: For all the kind endearing thoughts that arise from the relation of a father, must add abundant weight to the obligations and the solicitudes which lay upon him to continue in his state of innocence and obedience. If he had merely been appointed to be the representative of millions who were no way a-kin to him, it *must* have lain with much concern upon the heart of a good and *innocent man,* as the first man was, to oblige him to watchfulness

in his duty; but when every one of these millions is his own offspring, the obligation is enhanced by all the tenderness of a father, and all the solicitude that an innocent and benevolent father must be supposed to have for the welfare of those who should spring from him. And it is possible also that all this might be set before the first man in a very strong light by God, his Creator; he might be informed that he should have a large posterity, and that they should all stand and be happy, or fall and be miserable, together with himself.

VII. Man being furnished with all these principles and powers to enable him to stand his ground against temptation, with all these strong and tender obligations to secure his own happiness and the happiness of his offspring, was put into a state of trial, that he might acquire the rewards promised to obedience, and do honour to the governing justice and authority of God, while he was procuring happiness to himself and his offspring.

VIII. Unhappy man, though placed in these advantageous circumstances, yet gave way to the allurements of sense or appetite or passion, by neglecting his watch, he grew unattentive to the command, the promise, and the threatened penalty, he hearkened perhaps to *the temptations of some evil spirit*, he rashly determined on the side of sense and appetite, he ventured to break his Maker's law, lost his innocence and happiness, his Maker's image and his favour. It is no wonder that he lost his Maker's favour, for that depended upon the condition of obeying his Maker's command: When man had failed of his duty in the day of trial, God, the Governor and the Judge, does not and will not treat him with the favour which he shewed him in the days of his innocence and obedience. And we may reasonably suppose, that God who made himself and his goodness known to his innocent creature, and conversed with him in a friendly manner, forsook his disobedient creature and departed from him, and gave him none of those kind visits or comforts which perhaps he might enjoy before, nor had he sufficient encouragement to expect divine assistances in case of any future dangers or temptations*. Nor is it strange, that man should

* Objection. But whatever suppositions may be made by our fancy or reasoning, yet this could not be the real condition of man after his sin, to be thus forsaken of God, &c. because God, as a tender Father of our first parents, was careful to guard and cherish their bodies *by clothing them*, and he gave them a promise of mercy and a Saviour immediately; Gen. iii. 15. and the special aids of his grace on many occasions were vouchsafed to men. He revealed a gospel to them, or a way of salvation, and has been ever since multiplying instances of goodness and grace towards them: This appears throughout the whole bible, so that our only holding up the bible refutes this opinion.

Answer. The great God considered as a righteous Governor of the world, and upon the foot of his broken law, which pronounces *tribulation and wrath against every soul that doth amiss*, may be well said to forsake his disobedient creature, and that without encouragement to expect divine assistances, &c. These

lose his Maker's image by indulging one sin; for his nature itself became vitiated by this one sinful action, which may be accounted for several ways:

1. By acting contrary to the principle or habit of holiness which was in his soul, he violated and weakened this habit or principle of holiness: It was a bold venture for him to allow so much as a debate within himself, whether he should disobey his Maker or no: But by actually cheating or contradicting his conscience, and by sinning against the light of his innocent state, and his own mind, and reason, he broke the inward spring of conscience and virtue, if I may so express it, which gave him before a constant bent and propensity to holiness and obedience: As we find at this day, when persons of a religious education once violate the restraints of their own mind, and break the bars of conscience, they render its force much weaker for time to come, and go on to act contrary to it with still greater ease and freedom.

2. When man had once sinned against his Maker, his heart must necessarily misgive him, and his guilty fears continually arise: His reason and conscience must tell him, that he was an offender, a rebel-creature, and that his Maker had a right to resent his crime; and how terrible that resentment might be, he knew not. Thenceforward *he looked upon God with an eye of fear and dread rather than with an eye of love:* He might probably despair of mercy when he came soberly to bethink himself, how great was his crime against a God of such majesty and such goodness, who was the spring of his being and comforts, as well as his righteous Governor and his Judge: And then he could no longer love that God of whose mercy he despaired. And thus by losing the sense of the love of God to him, and by impairing or destroying the principle of love to God in his own soul, he lost, impaired or destroyed the truest and the best principles of all holiness and obedience. He could look upon God no longer as a friend whom he was wont to approach with comfort and delight, but he rather *avoided his company*, and feared or hated all converse with him, as an almighty enemy; and the further he departed from God, the more did the power of sin increase in him, and the love of God died.

are the representations of the bible concerning God's dealing with sinful men *as lying under the guilt of the broken law*; Rom. iii. 19. Eph. ii. 3. And in this view even the elect themselves are called *Children of wrath by nature even as others*; notwithstanding that God had provided a covenant of grace, whereby multitudes of fallen mankind should be recovered and saved: And he manifested it to our first parents and their descendants in various degrees and on several occasions, even soon after the fall. All this provision therefore for the good of man in this life, or for the salvation of him hereafter, does not hinder the scripture from representing men in their fallen estate under the broken law of works, *as miserable* and destitute of God's favour, and without hope.

3. By indulgence of some sinful appetite or passion, contrary to the dictates of reason and judgment, he weakened his reasoning powers, and gave such a loose to passion and sense after this victory that it more easily prevailed over him in all following instances, as is common in his posterity even to this day: Reason opposed and beclouded by strong passion loses its clearness of judgment; and when it is abused and disobeyed, and counteracted by sensual powers, it grows weaker in all its exercises about truth and duty, and its natural and original influence to govern our actions is greatly diminished. The more frequently we indulge an act of sin, the more are we blinded in our true judgment concerning the rule of duty and our violation of it, and the more sensible power does sin gain over us: Then every new temptation works with greater efficacy, and repeats its assaults with more success: And these victories of sin over the fallen creature, must be still more easy and frequent; when he hath lost all just grounds to expect any manner of divine aids or influences. Thus it is easy to conceive, how man by committing one sin against his conscience, and by cheating or violating his own reason, by indulging his appetites or passions to prevail over his understanding, and losing his sense of his Maker's favour, was quickly deprived both of his holiness and his peace, his virtue and his happiness. His judgment and reason being weakened by his abuse of them, are more easily imposed upon for ever after, and more liable to be deceived in matters of sin and duty, and the restraints of reason and conscience being enfeebled, temptation prevails upon him continually.

IX. Then sinful and miserable man going on to propagate his kind, according to the law of creation in his own image, and according to the constitution and covenant between God and man, produced all his race in the same degenerate, sinful and miserable state, and circumstances, whereinto he had plunged himself. Thus mankind are born with evil inclinations, and in the ruin and dishonour of their nature without the divine favour, and without the divine image, cast out of his covenant of love, thoughtless of God, or averse to him, vain and sensual in their desires, exposed to temptations from within and from without, and without any claim or just pretence to divine aid or protection. They are led away by the principles of flesh and sense from early years in opposition to the principles of reason, and to the law of holiness: *Their judgment is blinded* and biassed on the side of appetite and passion, they are often deceived, and they take delight in their delusions: Truth and duty become less natural to them, and less inviting: They wander in quest of happiness among sensible things, and immerse themselves in vice and folly; they grow up in sin, they rebel against their Maker, they throw themselves still more, and further out of the favour of God, by

fresh disobedience, and thence arise the iniquities and the miseries of the inhabitants of this world, even from their youngest years, to death and the grave.

X. To make it yet further appear, that mankind from their infancy and early years are under tokens of the displeasure of God on the account of sin, let it be considered here, that the first man who sinned might be justly deprived of some of his former blessings by God himself, as a direct punishment of his own sin, as well as by natural consequence he lost others of them: This is evident from what is said before. Now except the mere consciousness of sin, the shame and pain of self-reflection, or anguish of conscience, which is the natural effect of personal guilt, and belongs only to the personal transgressor, what is there of all the blessings which the firist man is supposed to lose either by natural consequence, or to be deprived of as forfeited to his Maker's justice, which his children do not also lose? They seem plainly to be deprived of them by reason of this sin of their parent, because they are blessings which they would have been possessed of, if their parent had stood innocent. Let us enquire into particulars: Are they weakened in their understanding as well as he? Hath not their appetite and passion too often a superior and prevailing power over their reason as well as his? Are not their thoughts and inclinations early immoral, *carnal and sensual* and averse from God and things spiritual? Are not their wills perverse and corrupt? Are not the evil principles of pride, malice, revenge, envy, working in them by nature? Are they not subject to powerful temptations on all sides, which are generally too strong for them? Are they not liable to diseases, to injuries from other creatures, to wounds, pains and poverty, *to hunger, thirst, and nakedness,* to miseries of every kind, and to death itself, as well as their first parent? If therefore all the natural evils, which fall upon, or are inflicted on the first sinner, on account of his moral evil, fall also on his posterity, always excepting anguish of conscience aud self-reflection, is it not evident that they are joined with him in his fall, and that they are fallen from their Maker's image and favour together with him? For we can never suppose they all would have been naturally, or from their nativity, so vicious, and subject to so many miseries, and so destitute of blessings, had they been propagated by a parent who had continued in the perfect favour and image of his Maker.

XI. Nor is it strange to suppose, nor is it hard to conceive, that this universal taint or infection, this general degeneracy and desolation of human nature, both with regard to sin and misery, should be conveyed according to an original, wise and holy constitution of God by the means of natural generation from one man to all his posterity; for we see the very same thing actually done

continually, in God's wise and holy providence. Do we not find the same sort of vice and iniquity, of disease and death, transmitted from parents to children, and that sometimes for many successive generations? As for instance:

1. In sins. How often do we find a proud, a passionate, a false, a malicious temper, a lewd or a sottish inclination, transmitted from parents to children; so, that the features of their faces are scarcely so much copied out in the offspring as the vices of their nature? And in some houses from age to age, there is a race of drunkards or adulterers, of cheats or thieves, of cruel, proud and malicious wretches continued in the world.

2. In miseries. How common a thing is it also to have the gout, the scurvy, the stone conveyed down from one generation to another? How does the king's-evil descend to distant posterity? How often does frenzy or madness run in the blood, and taint whole families? How frequently do the diseases of an infamous name, derived from the lewdness of predecessors, make the lives of their offspring short and miserable? And how many instances are there of a great part of a household that from one generation to another die of the small-pox, or a consumption of the lungs, in their youth, or in the midst of their days?

Now these are evident and unquestionable matters of fact with regard to particular sins and miseries, diseases and death; these things are certain beyond all contest, and why may we not easily suppose the same matter of fact to be true with regard to the general depravation, misery and mortality of human nature? Though the evidences of this general contagion may not appear quite so plain and so obvious, and within the grasp of our survey, yet perhaps reason may have as forcible arguments for it, and by this parallel instance may more easily solve the conduct of providence in this universal depravation of nature. And indeed I think such parallel instances never would have been found among mankind, were it not for the first and general condemnation which came on all men by the sin of some first parent, and the general depravation of all in that one head of our race; on which the next question proceeds.

Quest. IV.—*But has it not an appearance of Injustice in the Creator and Governor of the World, to make so many Millions suffer for the Sin of One?*

Answer. This appearance of injustice is in some measure relieved, if you consider this one man to be the natural head and fountain of all the rest; even as a sickly and weakly animal among the brute creatures *propagates* a race of feeble and sickly

animals, according to the common law of creation and propagation, viz. that every creature should produce its own likeness in nature and quality: And the offspring are exposed to the miserable consequences of those diseases, or sickly qualities which the parent animal communicates to them together with their natures. And if it should be thought hard or unjust, that a race of intelligent beings should be naturally subject to these laws of animal propagation, together with all the sinful and miserable consequences of it, yet the supposition of the first man being set up as a representative, a surety, or federal head of his posterity, as well as he was their natural father, will do much toward the removal of all remaining appearances of injustice in this part of the providence and government of God.

And indeed, I must confess, it is my present opinion, that the mere doctrine of the animal propagation of man, according to the natural law of creation, is not a sufficient relief to this difficulty, without supposing the first father of mankind to be a common federal head and representative of his posterity, as well as the natural spring and fountain of them. And the reason is this: Because if this scene of misery arise merely from the first parent being the natural spring of his race, it seems to impeach the goodness and equity of God, who has constituted this nature by a mere arbitrary act of his will: But if it arise from this federal headship, then it is owing to man's sin and God's rectoral justice and wisdom, punishing that sin according to this covenant*. But these two suppositions put together, I think, do best absolve and clear the conduct of providence, and the divine government from all imputations of injustice; especially if we consider and remember the following things:

I. Happiness might have been secured to all mankind by this constitution, as well as forfeited and lost. If there was on one side so great a risk as the innocence, welfare and happiness of mankind entrusted with one person, so that sin and misery would be brought upon millions if he sinned and lost the image of God and his favour, there was as great an advantage allowed on the other side to all mankind, even the everlasting security of their innocence, welfare and happiness, if this one person continued in his obedience, and preserved himself in the image and favour of his Maker: And there appears, so far as we can judge, to be so much equity in this constitution, that if we had no intimation of this account of things from scripture, yet the reason of the thing inclines us to believe, that this might

* If it should be objected, that this federal headship is an act of God's arbitrary will as well as the natural headship, and so both cases are alike; I answer, that the federal headship is a most eligible thing to all their posterity, if all had been present to give their consent to it; and for that reason I call it federal: But a mere arbitrary act of the God of nature seems to carry a harder imputation on God.

probably be the original appointment of God, the righteous Governor of the world. To enforce this sentiment, let us consider, that if the first man, who stood the surety of his posterity, had fulfilled the obedience required during all his time of trial, it would have appeared as an hardship upon all his posterity to have had each of them a single state of dangerous trial* imposed upon them too, which might have exposed them to temptation, guilt and misery: For since it is plain upon such a constitution, that they were to be involved in the guilt and misery of the first man, if he did not go through his trial well, and maintain his innocence and obedience; it seems reasonable also, that if he did finish his state of trial well, the advantage of it should have redounded to all those who stood represented in and by him, and confirmed their happiness.

You will say, what then would have become of all the millions of mankind in succeeding generations? I answer, They might have been seized as Enoch was, and translated to the upper world after some appointed time of obedience here on earth. You will query then,

Query. "Would not this time of obedience have been a season of trial to them?" I answer, Not a state of dangerous trial, whether they should be happy or miserable; but a season of proper trial and exercise of obedience to prepare them for different degrees of advancement in heavenly places, according to their fidelity and diligence. And by the way let it be observed, that if the first man had maintained his innocence, and his posterity been established therein, no man would have complained of it, but with thankfulness all would have accepted it as a divine favour and a happy covenant.

2. Remember what was before hinted, that this was the most probable and the safest way, to secure happiness to mankind by one man's having this vast and important trust committed to him, viz. The innocence and happiness of all his posterity; for he was thereby laid under much stronger obligations to watch and guard against every temptation, and to use more

* Doth that man write the sincere sense of his own mind and conscience, who charges these expressions about "a dangerous trial for Adam's posterity if Adam had stood," with this supposition or inference, that "we are none of us upon a state of trial now, and that Adam alone was upon trial for us all?" and yet to shew that he means this unjust censure, he spends almost two pages to prove, that we are in a state of trial now, because *there is a day of judgment coming, when every single person shall be rewarded according to his works.* But let such a man know, that we have ever owned and granted, that we are in a state of personal trial at present, and that the day of judgment is designed to decide that important event. But let it be remembered also, that this is upon the foot of a new covenant proposed to the world since the fall of Adam, not that old covenant whereby Adam was tried, and having broken it by sin, was condemned and forfeited his immortality, and his other blessings both for himself and his posterity.

vigorous endeavours to maintain his Maker's image and favour, than any single person could be, who had only his own happiness to take care of. By this means all the springs of benevolence and compassion to fellow-creatures, and all the tenderness of paternal love and pity to a numerous offspring, both which principles doubtless were very strong in innocent man, were awakened and set at work to guard against sin, as as well as the powers and motives of self-love, and all the principles of self-preservation: So that this constitution of God had not only justice and equity in it, but goodness and kindness.

3. Let it be considered also, that this is a common thing among men, for one person to be a natural representative, and as it were, to become a trustee or a surety for his posterity thereby; by which means they enjoy or sustain the honours or the dishonours, the riches or the poverty, which the merit or crime of their forefather hath procured. If a subject receive from his prince the honour of nobility, and be made an earl upon the account of his merit, together with the royal endowment of a large estate to support the honour, this estate and this honour will descend together to the latest posterity, and the eldest male of his family in all ages is an earl, and enjoys the estate which is annexed to the title. But on the other hand, if a nobleman rebel against his king, and is attainted of high treason, or proved guilty and condemned, he loses his estate and his honour together, he loses the favour of his prince at court, and that nobility which is the image of his prince; and together with him all his posterity are cut off from their pretensions to the honour and the estate: Nor is this ever counted unrighteous dealing among the governors of the world, why then should it be imputed as unrighteous to the great God who is the Supreme Governor of all worlds?

4. I might add also in the last place, that even where a person is not the natural head or fountain of life to others, yet he may be made their common legal or federal head, their representative or surety to act for them, so that they shall enjoy the benefits of his loyalty and prudence, if he behave and act well, or shall suffer many miseries if he be guilty of rebellion or folly. Is not a member of parliament made the representative of the whole county or town, and entrusted with the liberties of those whom he represents? If he assist in making good laws, the town or county enjoys the benefit of them; but if he join with others to give up his own and their liberties to the hand of a tyrant, they also become slaves together with himself. So a plenipotentiary is sent from a republic, suppose from Holland or Venice, to transact affairs of war or peace, and the whole community which made him their representative, either obtain great

advantages, or are exposed to many miseries, according as this plenipotentiary manages his own and their affairs with prudence and faithfulness, or suffers himself to be governed by rash and foolish principles, by negligence or falsehood? Now if any person who is not naturally the head and fountain of others, may be made their federal head or representative, much more may a natural head be appointed to represent them.

And if these things are so far from being charged with injustice in the common affairs of men, that they seem as it were necessary in some cases from the nature of things, why should it be reckoned unjust with God to deal with man in the same manner? And why may not all mankind with the same reason be said to fall into condemnation and ruin in their natural and federal head, and yet the great God be just and righteous*?

QUEST. V.—*Though the Justice of these Transactions may be granted in some Measure, where the Representative is chosen by the actual and free Consent of all those whom he represents, yet since this was not the Case between the First Man and all his Posterity, since they never consented that he should act for them, nor entrusted him to pass the Trial in their Stead, therefore why should they fall under the Penalty and Misery due to his Folly and Guilt?*

To which I answer these several ways:—1. In one of the cases amongst men which was described before, viz. Where a nobleman by his treason exposes his latest posterity to disgrace and poverty, he was not chosen the representative of his offspring, and yet the disadvantages that come upon them through his treason are not reckoned unjustly inflicted, though the crime was committed some years or ages before they were born: And indeed, as I have intimated before, how can any person be supposed to be a more proper surety and representative of a large multitude than the common Father of them all, who has the obligation of parental love to take care of his offspring, and who may justly be supposed to be most worthy of that post of trust and honour.—2. There are a great many instances in scripture, in the common transactions of providence, and the government of God among men, where the children have been so far esteemed as parts of their parents, or as one with them, that they have been rewarded with considerable blessings, and that through several generations, upon the account of their fathers' piety or virtue; and they have been also deprived of

* See an *objection answered* at the end of the eight question.

very great privileges, afflicted with sore diseases and calamities, and even punished with death itself, on the account of some criminal head of their family. So much has it been the way of God's dealing with men in many cases, that there seems to be something of a law of nature in it, that a parent should be a surety for his offspring, especially while children are not capable of acting for themselves.

And doubtless there is a justice in this manner of proceeding, which is well known to God, though not always so visible to us, *for the Judge of all the earth must do what is right*, he cannot, he will not do any wrong. *The seed of Abraham* were rewarded for the obedience of their father; Gen. xxii. 16—18. *The Rechabites* in their successive generations, have a promise of a long entail of blessings, because of the *honour and obedience which they paid to their father Jonadab*; Jer. xxxv. 17—20. *The Throne of Judah* was continued in David's house for many generations, because *of David's piety and zeal*; 2 Sam. vii. 16. *Phineas* had the promise of *a long priesthood in his family, because of his zeal for God*; Num. xxv. 12. And as blessings were thus conveyed, so were punishments. *The seed of Ham were cursed with slavery*, for their father's crime; Gen. ix. 25. *All the children were swallowed up by an earthquake, for the rebellion of Corah, Dathan and Abiram their fathers*; Num. xvi. 31.* *Achan's family were stoned and perished with him* for his theft and sacrilege; Jos. vii. 24. *The children of the Canaanites* were destroyed together with their parents for their abounding iniquities; Deut. xx. 16—18. *The leprosy was transmitted to the seed of Gehazi* for his sin of covetousness and lying; 2 Kings v. 26, 27. Fathers in this case are made as it were the sureties and representatives or trustees for their children though the children do not actually and formally agree to it; yet surely *God is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works*; Ps. cxlv. 17.

And we see these events frequently in providence now-a-days. Some families have as it were a manifest entail of blessings upon them, and some an entail of diseases and miseries, poverty and disgrace, on the account of their parents' conduct. And I think this is not to be attributed merely to their natural descent from such parents, but in the government of God, parents are made and esteemed a sort of trustees for their children in the good or evil things of this life, which renders a succession of blessings or curses in their families more just and equitable.

3. Though all mankind were not actually present to consen[illegible]

* The scripture leads us to believe that most of their children perished wit[illegible] them; Num. xvi. 27. though some or all of Corah's sons might be absent an[illegible] escap[illegible], chapter Num. xxvi. 11. Heb. Benei sons.

that their father should be their representative, yet the appointment is so just and so equitable in the Governor of the world, and also there is so much goodness in it, considering that they were to have enjoyed immortality and happiness if he had kept his innocence, that none of the race of Adam could reasonably have refused this proposal. For this father of mankind, as I have shewn, is supposed to have as much wisdom and holiness, and love to himself, and resolution to maintain his own innocence and happiness, as any single person among them could have; and he would have the stronger motives of benevolence and fatherly pity to make him watch over his conduct, and to guard him from sin, having the whole concern of the happiness or misery of his offspring devolved upon him. The care of thousands, dear to him as his children, and whose peace or pain, whose life or death depend on his conduct, would naturally awaken all his watchfulness beyond the mere care of his single self. And if we suppose all his posterity to have been endowed with the clear reason and wisdom, the sagacity and solid judgment, of innocent man, and to have had this question proposed to them, "whether they would each act for themselves in a dangerous state of trial, or have their common father appointed as a representative to act for them;" surely they must have chosen their common father to have been their representative: For their reason and wisdom would have assured them that their innocence and happiness were safer in his hands than in their own, in as much as the obligations that lay on him to secure it both for himself and for them, were much stronger than could lie on every single person acting only for himself.

Confirmation of this Scheme.—To conclude: I think we may venture to say, that this universal mortality and death, which even our adversaries allow to be derived *from Adam's sin*, and all that long train of sorrows and miseries, which are come upon all mankind, young and old, must arise originally from some "*federal transaction of the great God, as a governor, with their first parent, or parents;*" and some covenant made with him for their posterity, either expressed or implied, whereby they all justly fall under these evils and disadvantages: Or else it must arise from the sovereign arbitrary will and appointment of God himself, that upon our first parent's sin, all their posterity should become thus mortal and miserable as themselves. Now those who deny this our scheme or federal representation of things, are generally very tender and fearful of allowing any such hardships to come upon creatures by the mere arbitrary will and appointment of the Creator, lest they cast a blemish on the divine goodness and equity. And yet I cannot find any possible way to avoid this imputation on the equity and goodness of God, unless the universal misery and death of mankind be derived from some such

covenant or federal constitution, whereby they were all as i included in one head, and he as their great moral represe acted for them all, and by his sin involved them all in on Whereas if this ruin be derived from their first parent, dered merely as their natural head, the charge or imputati fall plainly upon the absolute and arbitrary will and sove of God as Creator, who thus appointed it. And let it served, that this would be such an instance of sovereigr which the posterity of this first man could never have chosen nor consented to, as a thing beneficial to them; w this cannot be said concerning the original federal constitu the first man to be the representative of his posterity, whi eligible by the wisest creature, as well as kindly, wisel equitably appointed by the Creator.

QUEST. VI.—*Man is a Creature made up of two distinc Soul and Body: Now if both these were derived fr Parents by a natural Propagation, then all Mankin be said to derive their vicious Appetites and Passio sinful Inclinations from their first Parent, which ha rupted and spoiled his own Nature by Sin: But sinc generally agreed, that the Body only is propagate the Parents, but the Soul of every Infant is imm formed by God himself, and united to the Infant-bod is it possible that the Soul should be defiled with sinful ciples, and partake of vicious Inclinations, when it the Body that properly comes into the World by ration*?*

Answer I. As the soul of the first man by sinning God, injured and violated the habits or principles of virt holiness that were in his nature, by boldly venturing to ac trary to them; so the vicious motions, or irregular appe the flesh, grew stronger in him daily, and prevailed mo more against his reason and his better powers; and these ferments of animal nature, these irregular passions and ap to unlawful objects, or excessive appetites or inclinations to that were lawful, grew so strong in this first man, that t frequently complied with them, and committed new sins the laws of his Maker.

II. These sinful ferments of the flesh, these irregular tites, these motions of corrupt passion, so far as they are

* Let it be observed here, that not the Calvinists only, who suppose man to be the legal representative of his posterity, are obliged to an question, and to solve this difficulty; but almost every sect and party tians, who allow any thing of original sin or degeneracy, are under eq gations to remove it.

in the flesh and blood, are conveyed down from the original sinner, in greater or less degrees*, to all his offspring in continual succession; and the soul, in its infant-state, is perpetually impressed and allured by these vicious motions, appetites and passions of the flesh; and it as readily complies with those that are accounted criminal, as with those that are innocent. It is true indeed, that in the mere infant-state, the soul has no knowledge of God, or his law, of virtue or vice, of its own duty or sin; and therefore, in its mere infant-state, the actions are not properly human or moral; nor can they be actually criminal in the sight of God, so as to contract actual guilt, till years of knowledge and understanding, and till the mind and will are capable of knowing, chusing and refusing moral good and evil; and at what time this is to be determined, the great God only knows: But when it is capable of exerting any actions of the will with understanding, and such as are properly human and moral, it contracts actual and personal guilt, by these sinful compliances with the flesh and animal nature. Thus original sin, especially that part of it which consists in the corruption of our nature, is evidently conveyed and communicated by the flesh; and thence it comes to pass, that the principles of sin in mankind, and the evil habits both in the soul and in the body, are so often called *the flesh* in scripture, because the flesh is the means of the propagation of sin, and because the vicious motions and ferments which are in the flesh, lead the soul astray to forbidden actions. It is granted, the soul has reasoning and reflecting powers, and is furnished with judgment and conscience, yet these are very young and feeble in childhood, and the soul seldom calls them into counsel to enquire or advise; for it finds it much easier to comply with every animal appetite

* Though original sin, so far as it is imputed, is equal in all the race of Adam, for it is the imputation of Adam's sin, or condemnation by it to suffer sorrow and death; yet original sin inherent, or the corruption of nature which is propagated from the first man to all his offspring, has various degrees in different persons. The very animal juices and ferments, in the formation of particular human bodies, may have more or less of the vicious tincture in them. And this may be partly owing to the virtues or vices of immediate parents, or other ancestors, or the particular tempers, humours and constitutions of the father or mother. Hence we say of some persons, they have more natural virtues than others, that is, good temper, compassion, moderation, temperance, &c. And others have more natural vices, such as, cruelty, envy, pride, drunkenness, wantonness, &c. The reason of this seems to be founded in the present nature of things, though we may not always descry the immediate and particular causes. But the general cause and ground of the propagation of particular vices to children, must be referred originally to their common interest in the guilt or condemnation of Adam's first sin. Without this I cannot vindicate the providence of God in the propagation of any particular vices by the appointed laws of nature. And if it be enquired, why some have more native vices than others, since the ground or demerit of all, is one and the same: I answer, That it is owing to the mere mercy of God that every child has not as vile and corrupt and vicious a nature or temper, as the worst; and if every one were equally vicious in their animal temper, the government of God would be justified in the permission of it.

and passion. Thus it practises vice, though in less degree: it passes from infancy to childhood; thus it grows up to tast indulge, and to delight in forbidden enjoyments. Then a knowledge increases, it sins against the plainer dictates of science, and with a more criminal consent of the will; th increases its guilt, and strengthens the habits of sin, both in body and in the mind, and grows up towards perfection in quity, unless restraining or recovering grace prevent.

QUEST. VII.—*But if we allow that it is possible the new ated Soul should be thus corrupted, yet is it agreeable t Justice or Wisdom, or Goodness of God, to create so n millions of Souls, pure, innocent and holy, as they mu in their own Natures, coming from the Hands of God, to unite them immediately to such bodies, derived from s Parents, and infected with vicious Ferments and Appet whereby they are so early, and almost unavoidably led sinful Practices, and defiled thereby?*

And, to make this question still more difficult, it might be ad

Is it not contrary to the Justice and Goodness of God to c innocent Souls and unite them to such Bodies derived sinful Parents, whereby they are, subject to many pa Sensations, such Anguish and Agonies, and early Mi before they can know any thing of good or evil, or committed any actual Transgression?

Answer.—Perhaps, this is the greatest difficulty in the w doctrine of original sin*, and therefore I shall offer at a hu endeavour to answer it in a more particular and distinct mar by the following steps or degrees of reasoning:

Reason I. Though the soul of man be created by himself, without depraved or sinful qualities in it, yet it n exists or comes into being, but as a part of human nature; that not as a piece of new workmanship from God's hand, as a part of mankind who are propagated from the first pa by the continued power of God's first creating word, *be fru and multiply:* Gen. i. 28. And thus, though the soul r comes from God rather than from the parent, yet man is t considered as propagating his kind, much in the same manne brute-creatures and all animals propagate their kind: And t descendants or offspring are tainted with any poison, diseas painful infirmity, which is mingled with the blood or an

* As abstruse and difficult as this question is, yet almost all parti christians, who acknowledge any thing of original degeneracy, are oblig answer it, as well as those who are called Calvinists.

juices of their sires or their dams. And this is according to the law of creation, and it can hardly be otherwise in the nature of things.

You will say, man does not propagate his kind by the mere mechanism of flesh and blood, and animal ferments; for it is the original and constant creative decree of God that produces a new substance, a human soul, and joins it to this body; whereas the offspring of brutes are propagated, and come into existence, by the mere mechanical agency of flesh and blood, without any other particular act of the divine will or power, or any creation of a new substance. To this I answer, That perhaps few or none of the common appearances of nature, or the constant daily events in the corporeal world, come to pass by mere * mechanism, or the impulse and necessary effects of the motions of the particles of matter without the influence of some superadded laws of nature, beside and beyond the necessary properties of matter; which laws proceed from God's constant uniform agency upon matter, such as the law of gravitation, or the mutual tendency of all the parts of matter toward each other, which is a law of nature, or decree of creation, and is in reality the constant uniform agency of God on the inanimate world: And some suppose elasticity, electricity, magnetism, &c. to be of the same kind, as well as all vitality in the vegetable and animal creatures.

And in this sense brutes propagate their kind, not merely by the mechanical motions of flesh and blood, but by some original creative decree of God, or constant law of nature, whereby matter is impelled into such particular vital motions and forms, and kindled into life in a succession of generations, by a constant uniform act or agency of the divine will. Let me add also, that it is by this universal divine agency, all animals borrow their breath of life from the air, which is an extraneous substance, which yet is then counted a part of themselves, and is called their breath, and their life. In like manner, when the infant-body of man is so far formed as to become fit for union with a rational soul, the soul then comes into existence, in union with the body, by an original creative decree of God, or a settled law of nature; and thus, the man and the brute, in their long successions, are both formed by the power of that ancient law of creation, this almighty creative word, "*be fruitful and multiply.*" I add also, that the soul, though it be a distinct substance coming from God, yet coming into existence in this manner by a law of nature,

* By the words "mechanism and mechanical," in this place, I mean only the mere effects arising from the natural and essential properties of motion and matter, considered only as a piece of solid extension moved: Sometimes the word "mechanism" is taken in a larger sense, so as to include all the superadded laws of nature or motion, which are impressed and maintained, through all the material creation, by the divine will; such as gravitation, mutual attraction and repulse, &c.

becomes a part of the man as much as the breath of life, which is an extraneous substance borrowed from the air, or as the blood of the child, which is hourly made out of the food of the mother.

II. In this view of things, the soul of the infant is not to be considered or judged of as a single separate being, but as always in union with the infant's flesh and blood, and as making up a compound creature of the human species, propagated from the parents as effectually to all intents and purposes, as though the soul itself proceeded directly from generation as well as the body.

III. If Adam had maintained his innocency, the universal and original law of propagation, would have been just the same as now it is; and the soul had been brought into existence and union in the same manner, and would have kept its original and native bias and inclination to holiness; for the animal body would then have promoted it rather than led it astray as now it does. And according to the first covenant, the soul of the child might have also hoped, or perhaps by prayer and dependence, have humbly claimed sanctifying influences, to preserve it from temptation and to keep it innocent.

IV. But since the soul, in the first moment of its being, belongs to a human body deprived from the first man who sinned, and that according to the rules or laws of creation and providence, it becomes hereby a son or a daughter of fallen man, and according to the law of creation it is naturally involved in the same circumstances of ruin with its parent: As the buds and branches that grow out of a rotten tree fallen to the ground, partake of the corruption and ruin, and speedy death of the stock; or as a feeble and diseased young brute animal partakes of the infirmities and diseases of its sire or dam? or as a child of a traitor is born a beggar, though his father were once a lord; or as the son of a lewd and diseased person derives perhaps both a lewd and diseased constitution from his parent.

V. Then being one of the race of sinful man, the young creature comes into the world under the common estrangement of the whole race from God by sin, according to the original law of creation, and the covenant made with its forefather, whereby the descendants or offspring come under the same circumstances with the parent, whether good or bad: And thus the child has no just claim to preserving or securing grace, and amidst all the temptations of the flesh has no right to any good influences or divine aids, but is left merely to the faculties of its intelligent nature. It is esteemed in the sight of God, as a part of the race that is fallen from their allegiance and from his protection, have lost his image and his favour, and have no hope but in and by the methods of recovering grace revealed in the gospel. And by the same supposition of the formation and union of the human

soul, by some constant original law of creation or nature, and acting as uniformly as gravitation on matter, we answer the difficulty of the soul's becoming subject to the sensations of pain and anguish: At its creation and union to the body, it becomes a child of Adam, and is exposed to the pains of nature, as a part of the curse coming on the first sinner, and on all his natural posterity, whose representative he both stood and fell. But there is hope of deliverance in the gospel from the pains as well as the sins which came into human nature from our first parents; blessed be God for this relief. To conclude; as I have acknowledged this to be the very chief point of difficulty in all the controversies about original sin, so I am doubtful whether this solution sets the matter in such a sufficient light, as to take away all remaining scruples from a curious and inquisitive mind. I confess it is the most probable hypothesis I can think of, and shall be glad to see this perplexing enquiry more happily answered. But if the case itself be matter of fact, that souls are defiled, and exposed to pain, by being united to human bodies so vitiated, we are sure it must be just and equitable, because God has thus ordered it, though we should not find out a happier solution of the difficulties that attend it, in this dark and imperfect state.

QUEST. VIII.—*Suppose it were granted, that this Representation of Things, if it were true, would in a great Measure account for that Universal Deluge of Sin and Misery which has overspread Mankind, yet what Reason have we to believe it to be true? Does the Word of God, which is our truest and safest Guide, give us the same Representation of Things, or support this Scheme?*

Answer I. The difficulties and darknesses which attend this important question, *how came sin and misery into the world?* are so many and great, that if, by reasoning on these subjects, we can but find any hypothesis, or supposed scheme of transactions between God and man, which will give a tolerable solution of these difficulties, and lead us through this dark scene of providence, without any just imputation or reflection upon the wisdom, justice and goodness of our Creator, it ought to have considerable weight with every reasoning and enquiring mind, if it be not contrary to scripture, though it should not be asserted, and expressly maintained in scripture. It was this same perplexing enquiry that led several of the heathens and Greek philosophers into many vain imaginations, and betrayed some of those professors of wisdom into various wild fooleries and atheistical impieties. Some of them thought that all things were produced *by mere chance*, others ascribed it to a *necessary* fatality and irre-

sistible connexion of causes and effects; some of these allowed a first cause or some divine being to set things in motion at first, but without any subsequent interposure or overnment of a wise, a righteous, or a merciful being. The best of them, that is the platonics, fell into the doctrine of the *pre-existence of all human souls*, and thought that all of them had sinned in a former state, and were thrust down into these bodies, subject to such perverse appetites, unruly passions, and huge miseries, as a punishment for those former sins. Others indulged a fancy that there were two supreme beings, one the spring of all good, and the other the spring of all evil: The Persians also took up with this opinion, and even a sect of christians was deluded with this doctrine, who were called Manichees. So great were the darknesses that surrounded this enquiry, *how came sin and misery, that is, evil both natural and moral, to be so universal among men?* It is evident that this general corruption and calamity which has overspread all the race of man, carries in it at first sight such a hard or doubtful idea of the conduct of God, their Maker, and has raised in many a thoughtful person such reflections upon the goodness and justice of God, and such hard thoughts of the Almighty Being who formed them, that it ought to be esteemed a great happiness, if we can but by way of conjecture and humble reasoning find a probable method, whereby these difficulties may be relieved, and the objection against the goodness and justice of our Maker refuted or silenced*.

II. Though God hath not thought fit to reveal to us at large in his word, all these particular transactions between himself, and the first man whom he created, yet there might be all this and more revealed to the first man; and it might be set before him in full light, to secure his obedience and deter him

* Those who oppose the doctrine of original sin will neither allow our arguing from reason or revelation.

Our fathers, as well as some present writers, have abundantly proved this doctrine from several places of scripture: and our adversaries have endeavoured to shew from the light of reason, that it does not agree with the reason and nature of things, and therefore, say they, scripture must be otherwise explained; and they are forced to labour hard to give some strained and perverse interpretations of it to support their scheme: And yet when we come in our turn to search what the reason of things will say on this subject, as is done in the present treatise, then it is replied, "why do we not immediately take our account from scripture?" And we are upbraided, that we set a candle before the noonday sun, that we weaken the evidence of a certain rule by bringing over it what is doubtful and fallacious.

Whereas all that I have attempted to do here, is to shew that reason goes a great way to teach and prove what scripture asserts, and that reason and scripture agree, as far as reason goes, in one and the same account of this matter. And thus we confirm our belief of this great article of original sin, which we learn both from observation and reason, as well as revelation. Sometimes indeed we introduce one first in order, and sometimes the other, and we place this subject in every light, both of scripture and reason, while we are representing their mutual agreement: And what is there in this conduct that is worthy of accusation, reproach or blame?

from sinning. But if we collect together all that is revealed concerning this subject, we shall find that the word of God leads us into many of the same solutions of these difficulties which our reasoning powers have proposed. Scripture gives us much the same representation of the entrance of sin and misery into the world, as we have already heard, if we will attend with diligence to the revelation which God has made, and this appears in the following particulars:

Proposition I. It is plainly taught us in scripture, that God introduced mankind into the world by the formation of one single pair, "one man and woman, whom he called Adam and Eve." Gen. ii. 7. "The Lord God formed man out of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul." Verse 18. "And the Lord God said, it is not good that man should be alone: I will make him a help meet for him." Verse 22. "The Lord made a woman out of the rib which he had taken from the man, and brought her unto the man." Gen. i. 27, 28. "So God created man, male and female created he them; and God blessed them, and said to them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth." Gen. iii. 20. "And Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living." Acts xvii. 26. "He hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on all the face of the earth."

II. God created man at first in a holy and happy state, in his own likeness and in his own favour; Gen. i. 26. "And God said, let us make man in our image, after our likeness;" and that none of the brute creatures might molest or injure him, but all of them might be for his service, he said, "Let them have dominion over the fish and the fowls, and cattle, &c. so God created man in his own image;" verse 27. And what this image consisted in, besides in his spiritual nature, and his immortal state, and his dominion over other creatures, we are told by St. Paul, Eph. iv. 24. where the apostle speaks of *the new man*, or the restoration of fallen man to his primitive temper, "which," says he, "after God, that is, after the likeness of God, is created in righteousness and true holiness." Eccles. vii. 29. Solomon assures us, *God hath made man upright*. And Moses says, when God had finished all his creation, he surveyed it, and found it all agreeable to his mind; Gen. i. 31. "God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good:" It was all according to his idea and his will, and well-pleasing in his sight. Man the last of his creatures, as well as all the rest, was very good, was holy and happy.

III. God originally appointed, that Adam when innocent should produce an offspring in his own holy image, or in the same circumstances of holiness and happiness in which he himself was created: And *appointed also* on the other hand, that if he sinned

and fell from his innocent state, he should propagate his kind in his own sinful image, which may probably be implied in those words; Gen. i. 26—28. "God said let us make man in our image, and let them have dominion over fish and fowl, &c." "And God created man male and female, and blessed them, and said, be fruitful and multiply, and have dominion over the fish and the fowl, &c." that is, when you are multiplied, let your seed maintain this sovereignty, this dominion, which is a part of my image, in your several succeeding generations. And Gen. v. 1—3. "In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God he made him; male and female created he them, and blessed them, and called their name Adam or man." *And Adam lived one hundred and thirty years*, that is, after his sin and his loss of the holy image of God,* *and begat a son in his own likeness*, after his image, verse 5. that is, his own sinful and mortal image, *and called his name Seth. And Adam died*, verse 6—8. *And Seth also lived, and begat sons and daughters* in this mortal and sinful state, *and he died also* as Adam his father did before him, and his children after him. It is not to be supposed that Moses in this brief history of the first generations of men, should make such a particular repetition of the image or likeness of God in which Adam was created, in this place, unless he had designed to set the comparison in a fair light, between *Adam's begetting his son in his own* sinful and mortal *image or likeness*, whereas he himself was created *in God's* holy and immortal *image*: And more especially when the design of the chapter is to shew how every generation of the sons of Adam died, it is obvious that Moses designed also to shew how this course and custom of dying came into the world, that is, by Adam's bringing his posterity into the world *in his own image*, as fallen from God and liable to death.

IV. God was pleased to put the man whom he had made upon a trial of his obedience for a season, he placed him in a garden of Eden or pleasure, he gave him a free use of the creatures for his comfort, but forbid him to eat of the fruit of one tree *even the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; for said he, in the day that thou eatest of it, thou shalt surely die*; Gen. ii. 17. that is, thou shalt from that time be liable to death: In which threatening were doubtless included all the infirmities, pains and miseries of this life which tend towards death and destruction, together with death and destruction at the end of them. And it is not at all improbable, that God should reveal to Adam, that he should be the representative of his posterity, and that the consequences of his obedience, or of his sin, should fall upon them

* That Adam lost this moral image of God by sin, is plainly implied, Eph. iv. 24. where we are said *to be renewed after this* moral *image*, viz. *holiness*.

ell as upon himself. All that appears as narrative and real in the bible, might be represented in the springs and causes eof to Adam, so far as God pleased.

V. As Adam was under a law whose sanction threatened tality and death upon disobedience, and there was a symbol eal of it, viz. *the tree of knowledge of good and evil*; Gen. 3, 17. so it is most highly probable, or rather certain, that l favoured him with a covenant of life, and a promise of life immortality upon his obedience, because there was another appointed to be a symbol or seal of this covenant and promise, is, *the tree of life:* So that if he had not sinned against l he should have eat of that tree and been established in im- tality. Gen. ii. 9. "Out of the ground the Lord God le to grow every tree, &c. the tree of life also in the midst of garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil;" the to be a seal of the promise of life upon his obedience, the er a seal of the threatening of death on his disobedience: l therefore after his sin God would not suffer him to taste of tree of life. Gen. iii. 22, 24. "Now lest he put forth his d and take of the tree of life, and live for ever,—God drove the man from the garden."

And we may suppose this tree of life did not merely signify confirmation of Adam, in life and immortality if he had con- ed obedient, but that it also included some advance of hap- ss since the fruits of this very tree are made use of in the w Testament, particularly Rev. xxii. 2. to signify the advan- delights and satisfactions which true christians shall enjoy in ven by the grace and salvation of Jesus Christ.

It may also be observed here, that some ingenious and ration- divines have supposed, that each of these two trees, viz. that knowledge and that of life, bore fruits naturally suited to ir federal or sacramental design: That the fruit of the tree of owledge being poisonous, would convey into the blood of the er such juices as should irritate irregular appetites and pas- ns should raise them to an immoderate degree, and should also iate the vital powers of man with diseases, and by degrees ng him down to death. And that the fruit of the tree of life ing suited to maintain the vital principles of animal nature, ould keep the flesh and blood in a temperate state of health, d preserve the appetites and passions in that moderation, as to always subject to reason and within the rules of innocence: nd that it had also some latent virtue, to heal all manner of dis- ders which could prossibly come upon human nature, if any uld come, in a state of innocence and virtue. It is described a plant both of healing and of immortality; Rev. xxii. 2. nd God would not suffer Adam, who was guilty of death, to ste of it after his fall, lest he should raise some false hope

thereby to have healed himself of all the poisonous effects of the forbidden tree of knowledge, and should neglect the salvation of the promised Messiah. But the chief reason for which I mention these two trees here, is to shew, that as there was an appointed figure, seal or symbol of immortal life and happiness, as well as of evil and death, both growing in this garden of paradise: So there was a real covenant or promise of life made to persevering obedience, as well as a law that threatened misery and death to man, if he were disobedient to his Maker.

Perhaps also we might farther prove, that there was a covenant of life and promise of immortality, and advanced happiness upon condition of perfect obedience, from many texts of scripture. The first is Rom. ii. 7. where the apostle is rather representing the terms of the covenant of works, than the terms of the covenant of grace, and says, "God will render indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doeth evil; but eternal life, with glory and honour to them who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honour, and immortality." And verse 10. "Glory, honour and peace to every man that worketh good." Here let it be observed, that the apostle, from the eighteenth verse of the first chapter to the twenty-first verse of the third, is evidently laying all mankind under condemnation by the law, and not describing the salvation which comes by the covenant of grace; and therefore he uses the words *glory, honour, peace, immortality, eternal life*, which are the promises of a covenant of works, but not a word of pardon, grace, or salvation, which are *promises of a better covenant:* And he represents the means of attaining these original blessings to be *working of good, and patient continuance in well doing*, υπομονη εν εργω αγαθω, that, is continuance in one good work without interruption or imperfection; but not a word of repentance and faith, as the means of obtaining these blessings. These are therefore the proper terms of the law of innocency and covenant of works, and this is the promise made to perfect obedience, by which no man now since the fall can be justified, as is expressly asserted; Rom. iii. 20. though innocent Adam might have attained *immortality, eternal life, honour, and glory by it.*

Text II. It is the covenant of works with the terms of it, as expressed in the books of Moses, which is cited by St Paul; Gal. iii. 12. "The man that doth the commands shall live in or by them:" And Rom. x. 5. this called *the righteousness of the law*, that is, that which entitles a man to the promise of life. And Rom. vii. 10. "The commandment of the law which was ordained to life, shews that life and immortality would have been the reward of obedience to it."

Text III. It will add prehaps some force to this argument, *in order to* prove a promise of glory and immortality made to

Adam, if we consider, that when the apostle expresses the fallen state of man, he says, Rom. iii. 23. *All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*, that is, have lost their hope of that glory of God, that glorious state in immortality which God promised, and to which man would have been entitled by his obedience, as chapter ii. verse 7. before cited.

Text IV. There is another text also which has been used to prove, that Adam was not merely under a law with a threatening, but also under a covenant with a promise; and that is, Hos. vi. 7. *They like men have transgressed the covenant:* But in the original it is, they have transgressed the covenant like *Adam;* which imports that Adam was under a covenant of life, as well as a law that threatened death: For there must be a promise of life as well as threatening of death to make a law become a covenant. But I proceed to the next proposition.

VI. Adam broke the law of his Maker, lost his image and his favour, forfeited the hopes of immortality, and exposed himself to the threatening of God, to many sorrows in life, and at last to death; Gen. iii. 17. "And God said to Adam, because thou hast eaten of the tree which I commanded thee, saying, thou shalt not eat of it; cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life: In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat thy bread, till thou return unto the ground; for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

Now that Adam lost the image of God, that is, broke his habit of holiness, or destroyed the inward principle of virtue and piety, is evident from the nature of things, as I have shewn under the third question, proposition the eighth. By making such an inroad upon conscience, by sinning against so much light, by giving such a loose to sinful appetite, by losing both his own delightful sense of the favour and love of God, and thereby losing his own love to God; his reason and conscience grew weak to subdue or restrain his inclinations to evil things, his corrupt appetites still prevailed further upon him, for he was forsaken of God, and had not any peculiar aids from heaven to resist temptation. And that he lost also the favour of God, and some peculiar privileges of the state of innocence, is plain; for he who used to converse with God with pleasure, and was well acquainted with *the voice of the Lord God in the garden*, by former delightful converse with him; Gen. iii. 8. now *heard the voice of the Lord in the garden, and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord:* And when *God called after him*, verse 9. *Adam said, I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and hid myself.*

Here it may be noted, that it is very probable, though Adam

and Eve had no garments in their state of innocency, yet they were not entirely naked, but were covered with a bright shining light or glory, as a token of their own innocence, and the divine favour and presence; such glory as angels sometimes appeared in, and such as Christ wore on the holy mount, such as arrayed him like a bright cloud at his ascent to heaven, and such as saints shall put on at the resurrection, when they shall be raised in power and glory. But God may be justly supposed to take away his clothing of glory from them, upon their sin, as a token of his withdrawing his favour and presence: For without this supposition how could they be said to be more naked after their sin than they were before? And how could our first parents be painfully sensible of any nakedness, if they had not lost something which clothed them? God also further manifested his displeasure, by *cursing the ground for their sakes*, and pronouncing upon Adam and Eve many sorrows, pains and labours in this life, and their *returning to dust* in death; verses 16—19.

VII. Adam after his sin propagated his kind, or produced his offspring according to the law of nature; not in the moral likeness or image of God, not *in righteousness and true holiness*, but *in his own* sinful *likeness*, as one fallen from God, with irregular passions, appetites to evil, corrupt inclinations, and sinful nature. See Gen. v. 1—3. cited under proposition III. Those expressions in Job seem also to refer to the same degeneracy: *What is man that he should be clean, or the son of man that he should be righteous? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Not one;* Job xv. 14. and chapter xiv. 4. David also says the same thing; Ps. li. 5. *Behold I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.* Some persons would persuade us, that these words are only an hyperbolical aggravation of David's early sins, and propensity to evil from his childhood: But the text is strong and plain in asserting sin some way to belong to his very conception, and to be conveyed from his natural parents, which is a different idea from his actual sins, or even from his early propensity to sin in his infancy: It asserts and shews the cause or spring both of this evil propensity and of his actual sinning which operated before he was born: So that these expressions cannot be an hyperbole, or figurative exaggeration of what is, but it seems to be a downright fiction of what is not, if original pravity be not thus conveyed and derived. If we look into the beginning of the bible, we shall find Moses describing the universal corruption of mankind. Gen. vi. 5. *Every imagination of the thoughts of the heart of man was only evil continually.* And verse 12. *All flesh had corrupted its way on the earth.* And chapter viii. 22. *The imagination of man's heart is evil from*

his youth. So universal and so early a corruption must be supposed to spring from an universal and early cause, that is, their propagation from a sinful original.

That the ancient Jews were acquainted with this doctrine, and that this was the sentiment which they had derived from their reading the Old Testament, will sufficiently appear to any one from the apocryphal writings, which were the product of some wise and knowing men among them; See 2 Esdra iii. 21. *For the first Adam bearing a wicked heart, transgressed and was overcome, and so be all they that be born of him. Thus infirmity was made permanent, and the law also in the heart of the people, with the malignity of the root*, so that the good departed away and the evil abode still.* 2 Esdra iv. 30. *For the grain of evil seed hath been sown in the heart of Adam from the beginning, that is, by the devil; and how much ungodliness hath it brought up unto this time? and how much shall it yet bring forth till the time of threshing shall come?* 2 Esdra ii. 11. *When Adam transgressed my statutes, then was decreed what is now done: Then were the entrances of this world made narrow,* that is, full of pain as the Hebrew imports, in which language probably this was first written: *they are but few, and evil, full of peril and very painful: For the entrances of the elder world were wide and sure, and brought immortal fruit*; that is, in the world of innocency, men would have been born without pain and lived to immortality. Verse 46. *It had been better, that is, happier for man not to have given the earth to Adam, or else when it was given him, to have restrained him from sinning: For what profit is it for men now in this present time to live in heaviness, and after death to look for punishment? O thou, Adam, what hast thou done? For though it was thou that sinned, thou art not fallen alone, but we all that come of thee.* Ec. xl. 1. *Great travail is created for every man and a heavy yoke is upon the sons of Adam, from the day that they go out of their mother's womb till the day that they return to the mother of all things, that is, to earth.* These were the sentiments of the ancient Jews.

St. Paul mentions his sentiments on this subject in his epistle to Rome and Corinth, which shall be cited immediately; for he had well learned this doctrine. Nor do I think that text; Ephes. ii. 1—4. can be well dismissed from the service of this argument, where the apostle tells the Ephesians, you "Gentiles

* The meaning seems to be this, though the law or rule of duty still remains written in the hearts of men, yet there is such a malignity, or sinful tendency derived from Adam our root, that the principle of obedience is departed and the principle of transgression abides, while the conscience preserves the rule of duty in man's heart or soul, and yet he has a propensity or inclination to disobey it.

were dead in trespasses and sins, wherein you walked according to the course of this world,—and the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: Among whom also we," that is, Jews, who were the peculiar people of God, or we christians who are now sanctified, even we also "had our conversation in time past, in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath even as others," that is, as heathens. *Even we were dead in sin*, verse 5. This is the plain description of all mankind, both Jews and Gentiles. Surely they were not born alive by nature in a state of righteousness, and afterwards made themselves dead in sin; but they were dead-born, that is, born in sin by nature, or through a corrupted nature derived from their parents, and were children of wrath by nature, or exposed to the anger of God. But this belongs rather to the next proposition.

VIII. As Adam produced his offspring like himself, destitute of the image of God, or defiled with sinful inclinations, so he also produced them destitute of the favour of God, or in a state of disfavour with their Maker, because under the same sentence of condemnation, misery and death together with himself. As I have proved this before, by shewing that pains and agonies, and often death itself, which is the appointed punishment of sin, seizes upon children immediately from their birth, before they are capable of committing actual sin, so there are some scriptures which lead us into the same sentiment, as Job xiv. 1. *Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble:* That is, his short life, and his troubles or miseries proceed from his very birth, or his propagation from his sinful and mortal parents: Otherwise God would not have appointed his noblest creature in this world to have been *born to trouble.* Yet this is the case: *Man is born to trouble as the sparks fly upwards*; Job v. 7. that is, naturally, for it is owing to his birth and his natural derivation from a sinful stock: We are a miserable race of beings, springing from a corrupted and dying root, prone to sin and liable to sorrows and sufferings.

Yet let it be observed here concerning one man, even Jesus Christ, that though he be the son of Adam in a large sense, yet by this propagation he falls not under that guilt and condemnation, nor that degeneracy of nature and those sinful propensities which are conveyed to the rest of Adam's posterity: And the reason is plain, viz. because he was not the son of Adam by natural generation or propagation, but by a miraculous operation of God and his Spirit, taking part of the body, or flesh, and blood of the Virgin Mary, and making a man-child of it: As Luke i. 34, 35. Now this part of the body of

the virgin which was assumed by Christ, being not a human person, but mere animal matter, came not under the general condemning sentence of Adam, and of all those which are naturally derived from him; and it was also purified from any inherent vicious ferments, which might reside in the animal nature of the virgin: And thus Christ had no original sin inherent; nor even imputed by the same constitution, and on the same account as other children have; but was perfectly innocent; and consequently he had not been exposed to suffer sickness and death which other children are exposed to, nor subject to any of our sorrows, if he had not been a voluntary undertaker to rescue and redeem fallen man, *by having all our sins imputed to him and suffered in our stead.* But this is only a thought by the way.

Let us proceed farther in the proof of this sentence of condemnation and death, coming upon all mankind for the sin of Adam, and let St. Paul in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans be brought as a considerable witness. I think this chapter cannot be fairly construed to any other sense. See verses 12—14. On these and the following verses I desire to make these plain and easy remarks:

I. Here Adam and Christ are set up as two distinct heads or representatives of their several families: Adam was the head of all mankind who became sinful and mortal by the corruption of our nature, and Christ was the head of the new creation, or of the saints who obtained righteousness and life by divine grace. Verse 12—14, the apostle says, "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned;" or as some render it, in whom all have sinned: And that with full as much or more justice than Levi was said *to pay tithes in Abraham*, his great grandfather; Heb. vii. 9. And then the apostle gives this reason to prove this headship of Adam: For, saith he, *until the law*, that is, from the creation of man till the law of Moses, "sin was in the world; but sin is not imputed where there is no law:" This cannot mean, where there is no explicit and positive law, for the heathens have sin imputed to them who had no such explicit positive plain law given them; but his meaning is, that sin is never imputed where there is no law divinely established, no constitution of duty and penalty at all. *Yet*, saith he, *death reigned from Adam to Moses*, that is, yet sin was imputed and punished by death, even upon all mankind both great and small, before Moses's laws: And the inference is, therefore there was some law or constitution during all the time from Adam to Moses, by and according to which sin was imputed to mankind; and death was executed upon them according to this law. Now what law could that be besides the law or constitution, which said to Adam as a representative,

and surety for all his posterity, "In the day thou sinnest thou shalt die!"

II. Observe that the apostle carries this argument yet farther: *Sin was imputed, and death reigned* or was executed *even upon those that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression;* that is, who had not sinned personally against an express and positive command given to themselves as Adam had done. Now this must include children or infants, if it does not chiefly refer to them; for *death reigned over them,* death was executed upon them; and this must be by some law or constitution, by which sin was in some respect imputed to them who had not committed actual sin; for without some such law or constitution sin would never have been imputed, nor death executed on children. Yet further,

III. Let us consider that death does not come upon those who had not sinned actually and personally as a mere affliction, or as a necessary and natural effect or mere consequent of their father Adam's sin and death; but it was at first the threatening of the law, and now it is a proper and legal punishment of sin: For it is said, that this sin "brought condemnation upon all men;" verse 18. Now this is a legal term, and shews us that death is not only a natural but a penal evil, and comes upon infants considered as accounted guilty and condemned; not for their own sins for they had none; but for the sin of Adam their legal head, or representative, and surety according to this constitution, or law, or covenant*.

In this eighteenth verse, the expression is very strong: "by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." It is true the words "judgment came" are not in the original; but if these words be not supplied, you must necessarily supply some other word of equal importance to make sense, or you must repeat the word offence or sin, or guilt; and say, "by the offence or sin of one man, sin came upon all men," who are the seed of Adam, or it was imputed to them to condemnation. And it is possible this may be the most proper way of supplying that elliptical way of speaking, viz. by repeating the word *sin or offence.* And so in the following part of the verse, "by the righteousness of one, not the free gift," but perhaps it should be, "righteousness came

* The author has read what opposition has been made to this natural and obvious exposition of this argument as handled by the apostle in this epistle, and he finds such perverse distortions of the scriptures from their plain sense, and such absurd consequences rising from this opposition, that he leaves what he has here said as sufficient to justify his exposition, to the understanding of a sincere and honest reader, notwithstanding all the boasting pretences to scripture and solemn exhortations to attend to it, which are introduced on the other side.

ll those who are the seed of Christ, to justification of
And it may be yet farther remarked,

. That in the original Greek it is not said, "by the
of one, but by one offence," that is, by the single
of Adam, when he stood as the head or surety of all
ring, and brought sin and death upon them by his disobe-
as verse 19. "by one man's disobedience many were
or constituted sinners, καθεσταθησαν, that is, became sub-
guilt and death by a righteous constitution: And the 16.
ems to have the same meaning, where one single offence
sented as condemning us through Adam, and stands in a
antithesis or opposition to the many offences which are
d through Jesus Christ.

There is yet a farther reason implied in this chapter, to
that Adam conveyed sin and death to his posterity, not
as the natural spring or parent of their race by propaga-
it as a federal head and representative of all his offspring
olved them in his own guilt, or liableness to misery and
y his own act of disobedience. Take it thus: As Adam
hrist are here represented by the apostle as the two
of sin and righteousness, of death and life to mankind,
s agreed by all in their expositions of the last half of
. and 1 Cor. xv. so the one is represented as a type and
of the other. Adam was a figure or type of Christ in this
espect; verse 14. And Christ is called "the second
d the last Adam," for this very reason; 1 Cor. xiv. 45,

As one was the spring of life, so the other was the
of death to all their particular seed or offspring; 1 Cor.
, 23. Now Christ is not only a spring of life, as he con-
new nature and a principle of holiness to his seed, but he
esented as the spring of justifying righteousness, or of
ation, and of eternal life and happiness; as procuring it
m by his own personal actions, by his own obedience and
gs: So Adam is not only a spring of sin and death to all
d who are his seed, as he conveys a sinful nature to them,
he brings sin and guilt, condemnation and death upon
y his own personal disobedience. And indeed this is what
stle, Rom. v. from the fifteenth verse to the end, chiefly
upon, viz. *it is by one man's righteousness the free gift,*
er righteousness came upon all men, that is, all his seed,
ustification of life; and it is by the offence of one man,
n who are the seed of Adam, *are laid under condem-*
; verse 18. *As it is by the obedience of one man many*
made righteous, or justified, so by one man's disobedience

Or if the word "all" in this place should be construed to mean all man-
is still the righteousness of Christ, which has provided this way of justi-
for all men, or this offer of justification to all men, though all do not
accept of it.

many were made sinners, or stood as guilty and condemned before God*.

It is true indeed, that Christ trains up and prepares his children for eternal life, by making them his children, by renewing them after the image of God his Father, or after his own likeness, or by giving them a holy nature, a principle of divine life, without which it is impossible they should be made actual partakers of happiness; and so he is typified by Adam, who conveyed a sinful nature, or his own sinful image to his children: But the chief thing which the apostle seems to have in his eye, in this chapter, is the conveyance of condemnation and death to the seed of Adam, and a justifying righteousness and eternal life to the seed of Christ, by their being the common heads or representatives, as well as the fathers or fountains, of their distinct households or offsprings; the one involving his offspring whom he represented in his own sin and death, and the other acquiring for his offspring whom he represented, righteousness, that is, a right to life and eternal happiness.

Objection I. Some persons have supposed, that it confuses and perplexes our ideas, to treat of mankind thus as one collective body, or to suppose that the race of man have ruined themselves in Adam their head; whereas, say they, the scripture often tells us, *that God will judge every man* personally and particularly *according to his own works*. I answer;

It takes away all this supposed confusion, and makes our ideas very distinct and plain, if we consider that in the general sentence of ruin and condemnation for the first sin of Adam, mankind may be reckoned as one collective body, under one head, falling under this universal condemnation by the original law of creation, and the constitution of the covenant of works, since it is evidently represented in this manner in several verses in Romans v. 12—21. Whereas in the last judgment every one will be personally judged and acquitted or condemned according to their personal behaviour under the several particular constitutions or dispensations both of law or grace which they have enjoyed.

Objection II. We are informed by the word of God, that there have been two general fathers, *viz.* Adam and Noah: Now there are three particulars that do summarily and distinctly contain the blessings, endowments and pre-eminence conferred upon Adam in his innocent state, 1. The blessing of propagation. 2. The dominion over the brutes. 3. The image of God in which he was made: All which are contained in Gen. i. 27, 28. Now the very same blessings and marks of excellency are

* All the texts cited under this question are explained and vindicated more at large by many writers on this subject, elder and later.

by God himself declared and pronounced more expressly and emphatically at the restoration of the world by Noah and his sons, and for the most part in the same words. Gen. ix. 1. *God blessed Noah and his sons, and said to them, be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth.* Verse 2. *The fear of you, and the dread of you shall be upon every beast, and fowl, and fish, &c. They are delivered into your hand; every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you*, that is, you have licence to kill and eat them. And again it is said; Gen. ix. 6. *Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: For in the image of God made he man.* Now say the objectors, this is a clear and undoubted demonstration *that the judgment which came on all men to condemnation*, and the expulsion of man out of paradise, did no way alter the primary relation in which God stood to man, and man to God. The love, regard and providence of God towards mankind in general, were still the same as they were to man at his first formation; and our nature as derived from Noah, is attended with the same blessings, endowments and pre-eminence, both natural and moral, which were pronounced or conferred on Adam, our first natural head as soon as he was created: And we no more derived a corrupt nature from our second natural head, than we should have done from the first, if he had never sinned: And whatsoever came upon us in consequence of the judgment to condemnation, *viz.* death, hard toil or labour, and sorrow, came upon us no farther, nor in any sense or degree, than what is perfectly consistent with the original blessing pronounced on Adam at his first creation.

Answer. This objection as formidable as it seems, may have complete and effectual answers given to it in this manner: It is readily granted that all that is contained in the blessing given to Noah is very consistent with that curse of God which came upon all men by the first sin; but that curse is not consistent with the original blessing that was given to Adam: And though the words are in the main much the same, yet if we review the history and context, we shall find the blessing of Adam and Noah differ greatly from each other in all the three particulars mentioned.

1. It is evident that the blessing first mentioned relates chiefly to propagation, and the continuance and support of man on the earth; but Adam's blessing was without those multiplied pains and sorrows, which after the first sin, fell upon women in child-birth: It was a blessing of sustentation, or nourishment of man on the earth, without hard toil and *sweat of the brows:* It was a blessing without *a curse on the ground* to hinder or destroy the fruitfulness thereof: It was a blessing without death and *returning to our dust*, which hinders the replenishing of the earth: Whereas the blessing of Noah did not take away *the pains of child-bearing* from women, nor the hard *toil and sweat*

of men, nor that threatened *death*, which dispeoples the earth continually.

Let it be observed also, that this blessing on Noah seems directly to refer to that vast desolation which was brought on the earth, and the lives of men by the flood, as the context plainly shews; and that God would not repeat this stroke, nor suffer the earth to be depopulated by beasts or men; Gen. ix. 1—7.

And I add farther, though Lamach seemed to have the spirit of prophecy when *he called his son Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work and toil of our hand, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed;* Gen. v. 29. Yet the curse coming upon the ground abides still in a greater measure from Adam to this day, for it *brings forth thorns and thistles* in abundance. Now Noah might well be said to comfort his fellow-labourers on the ground, since *he began to be an husband man, and planted a vineyard;* Gen. ix. 20. that is, he invented, or rather greatly improved the art of husbandry and cultivation of the earth, and thereby lightened much of the toil of man and the curse.

2. To Adam was given dominion over the brutes, which carries in it more than merely the blessing of Noah, viz. *That the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast &c.* For notwithstanding this fear and dread of the human form and stature, which in many instances appears amongst the brutal creation, yet sometimes, ever since Noah's blessing, they now bite or sting men to death, and sometimes tears them to pieces, which calamitous disasters would never have befallen innocent Adam, or his innocent seed; for *it was sin only that brought death into the world.*

And if Noah and his sons had licence to kill and eat birds and beasts, which was not given to Adam, a very ingenious writer, Doctor Cheyne the physician, supposes that this was designed in the providence of God to shorten the lives of men after the flood, thereby to diminish or limit their great wickedness: And probably it had this effect to shorten life, which vegetable food would have prolonged.

3. *The image of God* in which Adam was made at first consisted eminently, if we will believe St. Paul, *in righteousness and true holiness;* Eph. iv. 24. for the christian is required to *put off the old man*, that is, the sinful temper which he brought into the world with him, *which is corrupt, and to be renewed in the spirit of their mind, to put on the new man*, or holy temper, *which after God*, that is, in resemblance of God, *is created in righteousness and true holiness.* Whereas that part of the image of God, which remained after the fall was the natural image of God, *viz.* the spiritual faculties and immortality of the soul, or the political image of God in a degree of dominion over the

eatures; so the image of God signifies; 1 Cor. ii. 7. Or perps in the "corporeal image, or form," that is, in that masty of stature and countenance wherein God himself appeared id conversed with Adam in the garden; but the moral image as lost or defaced, or else it could not be said to be renewed. think it is sufficiently evident that the blessing given to Adam innocency, and that given to Noah after the fall, differed in such ery important things that the one was consistent with the conemnation and curse for sin, and the other was not: And consenently the race of man is far from standing in the love and vour of God in the same manner as Adam stood while he was nocent.

Thus in a few pages, I think I have made it appear, that e holy scriptures both in the Old and New Testament, and the ewish church in the intermediate time, seem to give us the same ntiments of the conveyance of sin, misery, and death from the st man Adam to all his offspring, and encourage us to receive, divine truth, that same doctrine of *original sin*, which human ason approves as most probable.

UEST. IX.—*What can the light of Nature discover concerning the proper Penalty due to the Sin of Man, or the proper Punishment inflicted on Man for Sin.*

First, Let it be observed here, that we must distinguish tween *the natural consequences of sin*, and the legal penalty pointed for it by God as a Governor. The question therefore not, *what can the light of nature discover of the dreadful conquences of sin among mankind? But what can it discover to be e proper penalty for sin appointed or inflicted by the Maker d Governor of the world.** After this ditinction we may proed to answer these enquiries according to the following prositions:

I. The remorse or anguish of conscience is not so properly punishment inflicted of God upon man for sin; but it is rather natural consequent or effect of guilt. It is an inward vexation mind that arises when the sinner seriously considers and flects on the provocation he has given to his almighty Maker

* I know it has been said upon some occasions, that God as the wise Creor and Governor of the world, has appointed such a connexion between sin d sorrow, that the natural effects or consequents of sin may be reckoned the pointed or legal penalties of it. And no doubt there is so far a truth in it, as at on some occasions it may be proper to set things in this light, to shew the isdom of providence. But still it must be acknowledged there is a real differce between the natural connexion of things by God as Creator, and the established or appointed laws *and rules of* government, made by the same God as a uler *of the world: And this will plainly* appear in what follows.

by his own folly and rebellion, and a painful fear and expectation of the vengeance due to such personal crimes. This can neither be transferred nor conveyed to any other person whatsoever, but is confined to the heart or conscience of the criminal: It flows from his own consciousness of his own personal offence, which consciousness can belong only to himself, and can raise those sharp inward self-reproaches in none but himself.

II. Man's continuance in sin after his first crime, and the sinful inclinations and growing depravity of his heart, whether they be considered as in himself, or as communicated to his offspring, cannot properly be inflicted by the hand of God as a penal evil, or as a legal punishment for his first sin: For though man be a sinner, God remains eternally holy, and he cannot infuse any degree of unholiness into the nature of his creatures, nor constrain them by any positive influence to continue in their disobedience, though they have begun to disobey him.

It follows therefore, that the continuance of man in a course of sin, his vicious inclinations and the depravity of his nature whether abiding and increasing in himself, or transmitted to his offspring, must be conceived rather as the natural effect and consequence of his first disobedience to God, contrary to the laws of his reason and conscience, as I have shewn under question III. propositions VIII. IX. These are not to be esteemed as a proper penalty or punishment inflicted by the hand of God, his Maker or his Governor. Yet it must be acknowledged too, that had there not been such a federal representation of all the race of men, in or by their first parent as their surety, whereby the children were fallen under the general sentence of condemnation together with their parents; surely I think a just and gracious God would never have suffered the innocent children of a criminal parent to be infected and tainted with the vicious ferments of flesh and blood, and those corrupt appetites and passions which are now transmitted to children from that first parent; but he would have found a way to prevent that sinful contagion. See question II. propositions IV. V. VI.

But now it may be fairly allowed, since children are involved in this general and original condemnation by the sin of their parent, the great God, as an offended Governor, lets his appointed course of nature take its way, and communicate the natural effect of one man's sin to his offspring in the depravation of their temper, and vicious inclinations*. And it may be further allowed, that man having provoked his Maker by sin, and he with his offspring lying under condemnation, they may be all left under the assaults of numerous temptations, and they have forfeited all manner of assistances that they might otherwise

* See the objections and answers at the end of the first essay.

e hoped for from their Maker against new temptations and r dangers of sinning; so that God may leave man to his own appetites, and the inclinations of his corrupt heart; and n he has only the natural powers of his understanding and science left him to resist temptations from within and without, ch powers are naturally darkened and weakened by his fall.

III. Man having once broke the law of his Maker and vio- d his allegiance to the universal Governor of the world, hath ever deprived himself of all hope of obtaining or recovering special favours from his Maker by perfect obedience; for he never undo the evil that he hath done: He who hath sinned once, can never more plead innocence, or acquire a right to blessing which he might hope for if he had continued inno- t and obedient. Whether this may be esteemed only as a ural consequent of sin, I will not now dispute; but it rather ns a penal forfeiture of all his hopes, and of his Maker's her favours. And this hope of favour from his Maker and God, to be obtained by perfect obedience, is still put further of the reach of man, when it is evident he continues to prac- disobedience, and multiplies his offences against God, his ker, in the course of life.

IV. Man having sinned against a Being so greatly superior himself in worth and excellency, as well as in authority, he ld never do or suffer any thing by way of recompence or alty, that would make full atonement or satisfaction to God his offence. 1. All that he could do, in a way of obedience service for time to come, would be no more than his duty ich he owes to his Maker by the law of nature; and if he had sinned, God has a right to all his duty; and therefore future dience could never atone for a past sin. 2. All that man ld suffer would make no satisfaction for the offence: For if nces amongst our fellow-creatures of different characters, such a neighbour, a brother, a father, a king, are aggravated ording to the character and dignity of the person offended, n the offence against God is as highly aggravated above all nces of fellow-creatures, as the nature of God is superior to nature of creatures: And if this be so, then every offence inst an infinite God, carries a sort of infinity in the nature of And divine wisdom only can fix the proper punishment for h offences, though divine goodness may join with wisdom, to the actual limits of it.

V. But thus much we may infer by our own reason, with re evidence and certainty, that man by his sin against his ker, has forfeited all his Maker's benefits. The great God ving given man all that he has, *viz.* his nature and existence, life of his body and soul, all his powers, his comforts and his pes, and this God being offended and provoked by the sin of

his creature man, who has by wilful rebellion renounced his allegiance; this God, I say, has a just right to resume all that he has given him, he may take away all his own favours from a rebel, he may annihilate and destroy him utterly, both soul and body: And by this utter destruction, man is punished with the everlasting loss of his being and consciousness, his soul and body, and all their comforts; which destruction, as it is due to every sin against God, so perhaps it is a punishment not improper to be inflicted for the least sin: and yet it is in some sort commensurate to the infinite evil contained in sin, as it is a loss of all blessings for an infinite duration, that is for ever and ever.

But since, in actual transgressions, there are different degrees of aggravation, God in his wisdom and justice may suit the degree of punishment exactly to the degree of every man's offences; and yet, by making any part of it eternal, may answer the infinite demerit of sin. According to the different aggravations of sin, God may deprive the sinner of some of his powers, and of all his comforts, and leave him only an existence in misery for a thousand years, or for ever: He may take away his bodily life, and leave his spirit according to its own immortal nature, to exist for ever in sorrow and anguish of mind, as a natural consequence of sin; he may deal with him as he pleases, and re-assume as many of his gifts and blessings as he will, limiting the exercises of his own goodness, or his punishing justice, as his wisdom sees fit; and he may also punish him with a most painful sense of new-inflicted evil, as well as with the loss of all good. This seems to me to be the most natural notion that man could arrive at by the mere light of reason, viz. that sin against God forfeits all that man has received from God, and gives God, as a righteous Governor, a right to resume it all or as much of it as he pleases; and perhaps this is what is eminently signified by the word *death*, which scripture threatens as due to sin. See more in the marginal note, and question XI. section I. This therefore I shall treat of more largely and particularly.

VI. But first, I would take notice of that remark, which Mr. Locke makes on the last verse of the first chapter of the epistle to the Romans, where the apostle expresseth himself thus concerning the wicked heathens, in our common reading, viz. *Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death.* But Mr. Locke endeavours to correct this reading by a direct contradiction of it, and that borrowed from one manuscript only; viz. *Who knowing not the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death:* That is, as he explains it, *they knew not that God had pronounced death to be the wages of sin.* I grant indeed the heathens knew it not to be a divine revelation; but their own

oh could and might tell them, that if they had offended God, original and sovereign giver of life, they had forfeited this and that God might deprive them of it, that is, put them to th; and as he had given them health as well as life, so he ht lead them down to the grave by many and long sicknesses sorrows, depriving them of health and ease*. Here then is ry natural and evident account whence all the maladies, suffings, miseries and death that attend mankind may arise. ason teaches us that they are all the natural or penal effects of and of the anger of our Maker for sin: For man being a onal and intelligent creature, must come out of the hands of d perfectly holy and perfectly good, in a state of innocence, ue, health and peace; this the goodness of God seems to aire: And whatever pains or miseries attend him, cannot be necessary consequences of his nature as a creature, because ich he must be made innocent and undeserving of pain, but ust be therefore the fruit of some voluntary choice of evil, or e early and universal offence against his Maker. How can suppose that a just and merciful God would inflict on every n so much natural evil, or pain and death, where there was moral evil to deserve it, no sin to procure it?

VII. Reason or the light of nature would further inform us, t since *all mankind are sinners*, and since God, the righteous vernor of the world, sees fit to punish them for their sins, and to deal with them as though they were innocent, the same hteous God, as I hinted before, would think it proper to ish greater iniquities with greater miseries, and to deal more ttly with those whose sins were of a lesser kind; or that such o have some degrees of virtue found among them, or less grees of guilt, should feel a lesser and easier punishment.

VIII. Now the common observation that every man makes the affairs of this world may sufficiently inform him, that re is almost an infinite difference in the moral characters and actices of men, and in their deserts of punishment. It is plain the sun-beams, that all men in the world may be divided into ese three sorts of persons:—1. There are some persons of an andoned and profligate character, whose whole life is a conti-

* Here note, that as human life often includes not only existence, but all blessings that attend it, and all possible enjoyments whatsoever, more especi- r such as are visible and sensible; so the word "death," in the general notion it, and in the most obvious and common sense of mankind, may reasonably lude a loss of every thing which man possessed, that is, existence itself, ether with all the blessings of it: And, consequently when "death" was atened for sin, it most obviously appeared to signify, that by sin man for- ed every thing that he had received from his Maker. This, I say, might be first and most obvious signification of the word "death" when it was consi- ed as reaching only to things visible, though afterwards its sense might be larged or limited on particular occasions as the invisible world came further o the notice of men.

vastly greater than the punishment of those who had much more virtue, and better sentiments and practices of piety. Nature teaches us to say with Abraham; Gen. xviii. 25. *Shall the righteous be as the wicked? That be far from the Lord: Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?* And therefore some of these heathens supposed the souls of these very vicious persons after death to be sent into sharper torments, and that for a longer duration, if not for all the length of their natural immortality.

XIII. And I think it may be also inferred, with some probability, from the most abundant goodness of God, that if he does not entirely pardon the penitent, and if there be any punishments necessary in the other world, for more virtuous persons by way of purgation, because even the best have sinned, not only these punishments shall be much lighter than the miseries of those vicious creatures who have lived a long life of constant impiety; but it seems probable also from the same infinite goodness, that there will be some reward for those that have sincerely repented of their sins, in the faith or hope of his mercy, have asked forgiveness of their Maker, and have endeavoured to honour him, though with many imperfections, and to serve their fellow-creatures from a right principle of love to God, and love to man, if any such shall be found among mankind. But this leads directly to the next question.

QUEST. X.—*What can the Reason of Man, or the Light of Nature find out concerning the Recovery of Man to the Favour of God? Or what Hope of Pardon and Happiness can sinful Mankind ever obtain by the mere Exercises of their own Reason?*

Answer. Human reason, exercising itself on this subject, might probably fall into such a train of thoughts as this:

Proposition I. It is certain that a sinner's repentance of past crimes, and asking forgiveness for them, together with sincere promises of better obedience, are no satisfaction to a governor for the dishonour done to his law by any capital offence: Nor is it ever counted in human governments a compensation for the injury done by the criminal to the authority of the governor, or to the public welfare: And therefore the criminal among men must be punished by the law, to guard the honour of the government, and secure obedience to the law, and he must yield his life for his offence, notwithstanding all his repentings. Nor is the governor thought too severe or cruel who requires it, nor is his goodness blemished by it. And in the same way of reasoning, we may suppose that repentance, and asking forgiveness, and better obedience for time to come, are by no means a satisfaction

he great God, the Lawgiver and the Governor of the world, the injury done to his divine authority and his government by mer sins: Nor can his goodness be justly reproached if he ist on the punishment of the offender. If lenity should be ways practised, and sinners should come off always without nishment, there would be no sufficient guard and defence to aintain the authority of the lawgiver amongst his subjects, and deter them from new offences. I add further also, that it is ot possible that any future virtues of a former offender, or any ture instances of obedience, can make atonement to God, and ive a recompence to him for past iniquities, or repair the onours of the broken law, because the creature owes his highest nd best services to God his Maker, according to the law of cre-tion, and he can never do more than was his duty.

II. Yet when we consider God not only as *a righteous Go-ernor*, that will vindicate his own honour and authority, but lso as *a God who is holy*, and loves holiness in every degree, nd is also *the most beneficent and merciful Father* of his mise-able creatures, we may reasonably suppose he will encourage nd reward every little appearance of goodness that he sees mongst them, where he can do it with a salvo to his honour nd government. And when we further observe, there will be icked creatures in abundance for him to make the objects of his engeance, and to testify his severe displeasure against sin, and indicate the honour of his broken law; surely we may suppose t very probable by the light of nature, that where any person of he race of men does *repent of sin*, does return to his obedience o his Maker, and practise piety towards God, and single and ocial virtues, so far as he has any powers, opportunities or ad-antages to find out and perform his duty, we may probably sup-ose, I say, and hope, that God will favourably pass by the ransgression of such creatures; and especially when we consider hat the prevalence of corrupt nature sometimes is almost unavoid-ble in the present state of sin and temptation in which they were orn, we may reasonably hope that the blessed God will put all hese considerations into the balance, and will make gracious llowances for them: Upon this account we may have some eason to think, that virtuous and pious men, though their hearts r lives are blemished with some sins and frailties, will not go ithout some sort of reward. It is probable that God will make appear in a future state, that his goodness has some regard ven for imperfect virtue, in repenting sinners, as well as his ustice demands its due honours in the punishment of criminals, ho continue in their rebellion without remorse.

III. It might be added yet further, to enforce this conside-ation, that since God preserves mankind notwithstanding their aily offences, and affords them so many circumstances of ease

and pleasure, giving them *sun and rain, and food and delight in this world*, together with the long forbearance of punishment: since he continues their natural powers, and the operations of the reason and conscience of men, dictating their duty to them, approving their good actions, and reproving them for their vices, in order to excite and encourage them to the practice of virtue, we may probably infer that he is now standing upon some terms of mercy with them, that they are upon their good behaviour, and are placed in a state of trial or probation, for future rewards or punishments, and that they are not utterly abandoned as condemned criminals, without hope, and merely waiting for the time of execution.

IV. From all these considerations the light of nature may probably infer, that God has designed some way of salvation or recovery for poor sinful wretched mankind: And that if there be any such thing as an atonement necessary to answer for the sins or failings of virtuous persons, so that God may forgive them with more honour to his law it is probable that God will provide this atonement for them, since it is impossible that the guilty creature man can find out or produce any such atonement for himself, he having forfeited all that he has by sin, and nothing that he can do can answer the present and future demands of obedience; much less can he make a recompence for a past disobedience.

Though reason is utterly at a loss to find out the secrets of divine government, and the methods that God has taken to honour his law and vindicate his authority by the sufferings of his Son Jesus Christ, which are revealed to us in the gospel, yet the reason of man may hope, that repenting sinners, and men who practise virtue and piety, so far as the light of nature can assist them, shall be made partakers of this mercy and this salvation, though they know not the particular methods whereby it is brought about; for if the continued forbearance and goodness of God invites and calls them to repentance, which St. Paul confesses, we hope it will also invite and incline him to forgive, where this goodness has attained its proper design on his creatures, and brought them to repent.

V. Reason also will give us this further information, that if God has provided any way or method of recovery for sinful and miserable man to his image and to his favour, he has taken effectual care that some part of mankind shall be certainly recovered and saved by it: And that he has not left it merely and utterly to the uncertain prospect of what the free-will of men would do toward their own recovery, under all the disadvantages of a tempting world without, and sinful appetites and passions within, lest all the provided methods of recovery be neglected, and none receive it and be saved. Surely the all-wise God would take

are that such a glorious salvation should not be provided and proposed in vain.

VI. It is probable therefore that the grace or goodness of God in conjunction with his wisdom, would or did fix upon some persons among degenerate mankind, to whom he resolved this way of salvation which he has provided should be effectual: And for this end, either did or would place them in circumstances of less temptation, or give them greater advantages for the improvement of their minds, and by proper providences would awaken their natural consciences, or set before them the differences of virtue and vice, with all their consequences in a future state, in a stronger light, and with more powerful conviction; and that all these persuasive methods might not miscarry, it is probable that he would give some divine touch to their spirits if it were necessary, and would cause them to point toward himself, and a future happiness.

VII. Nor is there just reason for any criminals to complain against the goodness of God, for effectually leading some of their fellows into a certain and secure method of salvation, since they sustain no injury thereby. Why should their *eye be evil because God is good?* Let this matter be examined and scanned as far as it will by the powers of reason and present observation, and we shall find no such terrible consequences from the doctrine of God's choice, or appointment of particular persons to obtain this eternal salvation, as some learned men have imagined, provided that none of the rest are thereby prevented and hindered by any act of God.

VIII. Our eyes see plainly, and our constant observation of mankind assures us, that far the greatest part of them are not pious and holy, but sinful and rebellious against their Maker, and are wilfully running on in the paths of sin and madness, to condemnation and punishment; we must be convinced daily, that the bulk of mankind are by no means fit to be admitted into a heaven of happiness, which consists in the *knowledge, love, and enjoyment of God*; nor are they at all inclined *to repent and return to God;* but that they are rather rendering themselves daily fitter object of divine displeasure; and to all appearance, the greatest part of them are like to be punished in another world, for sins committed in this. Now when the great and blessed God had provided a means of recovery sufficient for all these sinners, and yet foresaw them disinclined to accept of it, would it be unjust in him to resolve that some should certainly be recovered by it? Might he not, in consistence with equity and justice, form a decree that all these vicious and wretched creatures should not be utterly miserable: but that he would take certain and effectual care to save some of them from this madness and misery? When he had *provided such* a way of recovery as might secure

the honours of his own government, might he not resolve to spare and save a considerable number of them? And in pursuit of this resolution, might he not set things necessary to their salvation in such a light before their eyes, as they should see their danger and their only hope, and be powerfully persuaded to repent of sin, and trust in the divine methods of mercy? Might he not thus engage and incline them to lead new lives, that their souls might be fit for happiness after death, in another state? Would not such a conduct be a manifestation of great grace and favour in God to men, even though he did not extend this favour to all the race of mankind? What injury doth he do to the rest on whom he doth not bestow this favour? May he not, as a wise and righteous Governor, see fit to let many rebellious subjects go on in their own impenitence and folly, till they receive the just demerit, as well as necessary consequence of their own rebellions? What possible reason of cavil can be raised against a sovereign Creator, Lord and Benefacter, if he should act thus with his sinful creatures, since his goodness to some doth not in the least hinder others from obtaining the salvation which is offered to all?

IX. As for the rest of degenerate mankind, does not their actual continuance in their rebellion and sinfulness shew us, that though the way of salvation provided has a sufficiency in it to save them all, yet their salvation is not secured? But they are continued under many mercies, and the common operations of reason and conscience, with various degrees of advantage for virtue and piety, with hopeful encouragements to excite them *to repent of sin and return to God*, and very probable hopes of acceptance, if they sincerely repent of past sins, and practise the duties of love which they owe to God and man, and betake themselves to the free mercy of God, so far as it is revealed, and so far as reason and conscience can guide, and enable them in this imperfect state. And can our reason say, that the great God is bound to go farther than this toward the recovery of sinful man?

X. These are some of the reasonings of the light of nature on this divine subject. It must be granted indeed, that if we had no assistances from revelation, the wisest and most thoughtful of men, by the mere light of nature, would hardly draw out their inferences to this degree of evidence and just hope: For if they could, why had not Socrates and Plato, those excellent philosophers, said the same things long ago? Are we so much better furnished with genius and the powers of reasoning than they were? Why should we be so vain and conceited of ourselves? It is certainly divine revelation and the advantage which we have from the word of God among us, that enables us to carry our reasonings to such a length. Yet when we have many noble hints and lifts given us by the bible, to spread these

:enes and ideas before us, and to carry us into this train of con-
equences; we may then make it appear, that these propositions
re either certainly or probably connected with each other, and
at these consequences; may be esteemed the result of fair and
ee reasoning on this subject.

XI. This might be illustrated by a plain and obvious simili-
ide, or rather a comparison between the sciences of geometry
d religion, as the one is assisted by Euclid, and the other by
loses, and the other holy writers. Euclid has drawn out his
asonings upon lines and circles, angles and numbers, into a
ble set of propositions in his books of geometry, and filled the
orld with most useful pieces of knowledge built upon undenia-
e demonstrations. Every man has the natural powers of rea-
ning as well as Euclid, and by the advantage of some acquaint-
ce with his propositions and reasonings, or the works of some
her great geometrician, a multitude of men have made a rich
rogress in this science, and can draw up a scheme of geometry,
a chain of just consequences: But without these advantages
ere is not one man in ten thousand would carry on their reason-
gs half so far as Euclid has done, or find out one quarter of his
ropositions, or the arguments whereby he proves them. The
me thing may be justly said concerning our drawing out doc-
ines and inferences upon the affairs of God and religion, by the
ght of nature, with the bible in our hands, which not one man in
n thousand would be able to do, or at least would ever do in
ct, without this advantage.

XII. Let us here stand still and recapitulate some of the
ings we have mentioned. Let us consider the present
retched degenerate state of all mankind, the giddiness and
arkness of their understandings, the power of their prejudices,
e vicious inclination of their hearts, the influence of evil ex-
mples round them, and the universal stream of impiety or
olatry, folly or vice, that has carried away all nations; let
s consider how very poor and low, how wretched and ridi-
ulous were the sentiments of men on divine subjects, and the
ffairs of religion in the days and nations of heathenism; let
s reflect how wild are the notions, and how weak the rea-
nings of men, who are left entirely to the mere light of
ature, or who have no revelation but such feeble glimpses
nd broken hints as they have derived down by long tradi-
on, from the far distant heads of their families, Shem, Ham,
r Japheth; let us think with ourselves how exceeding few
f the heathens, without some communications with the Jews,
r some traditional hints of ancient revelation, have been ever
d to repent of sin, to make supplication to the true God
r forgiveness, to practise piety towards God, or virtue
wards men, from a sincere design to honour and obey their

Maker; let us consider the best schemes of religion and mor that were ever given by the heathen philosophers, and ob how grossly defective they are, and how little they themselv their disciples ever practised them. Again, let us think o wisest and best of them, whose virtues made such a blaze i heathen world, how universally they neglected *the love of* as the principle of their virtues, and *the glory of God*, as end of them; "for though they knew God by the light of ture, they glorified him not as God;" Rom. i. 21. And l farther review the wretched character that the apostle Paul of the Gentile world, in Rom. i. Ephes. ii. Col. i. &c. into abominable iniquities they were plunged, even whole tribes nations of men; and if we then reflect how well these acco of St. Paul agree with the reports of modern travellers, I we shall find but exceeding few who can make any claim or tence to the future rewarding grace of their Creator. And haps, upon a view of these matters of fact, the surest thing reason can determine is this, that when all shall stand befor judgment-seat of God, the better sort of heathens can aris higher in their utmost claims or pretences, than to be treated some lighter punishments; and that the more impious and ab inable wretches will be distinguished by more severe and d ble inflictions of misery; for the very best cannot lay a just sure claim to any reward. I will not dare to say this is the most favour God will shew them, but this seems to be the utr certain claim or pretence to favour, which, by the light of nat they can justly make for themselves.

QUEST. XI.—*What does Scripture reveal to us concern the Punishment due to Sin? Or, what are we to derstand by that Death which the Scripture tells was threatened to Man, as the Penalty due to the Offence, or as it is inflicted on Mankind on the Acc of Sin?*

It is evident from the second chapter of Genesis, and f many other places in scripture, that death is the penalty th tened for the sin of man; Gen. ii. 17. *In the day thou e thereof thou shalt surely die.* Now under this term *d* mentioned in the original law of innocency, many of our ch tian writers have generally supposed every thing to be cluded which has been ever since called *death*, in the Ol New Testament; viz. *natural death*, or the death of the bo *spiritual death*, or the loss of God's favour and image in the so *and eternal death*, or torment both of soul and body in anot

world. Let us consider how far the word *death* ought reasonably to be extended to each of these:

I *Natural death, or the death of the body*, is one thing plainly designed in the first threatening, beyond all controversy. The natural life of the sinner is forfeited to him who gave it, when he has once broken his allegiance to his Creator and supreme Lord. That this is the first and most obvious idea of the punishment threatened, may be plainly proved, because this is the universal, common, and literal meaning of the word death, in all human languages. This is also the very sense of the same writer Moses, when he uses the same words in all other parts of his writings, viz. *Thou shalt surely die; or, dying thou shalt die.* In those places it means evidently temporal death, as might be proved easily if we consult all those places. And let it be observed, that in those early ages the future and invisible world being very little brought into view, the word death might naturally include in it the forfeiture of all being and all comforts whatsoever, since it evidently means the loss and forfeiture of all visible being, life and comforts; for all these appear to vanish at death. And this notion of death will not be strange, if we can agree to the learned and ingenious Mr. Warburton's sentiment in his *divine legation of Moses*, viz. that the *doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is not to be found in the Mosaic dispensation, nor did it make any part of it;* though I dare not so universally pronounce this opinion true.

Besides, this death of the body was positively foretold to Adam, and was the sentence pronounced upon him when he had actually sinned: *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return;* Gen. iii. 19. And accordingly we find, that *when Adam is said to beget a son in his own likeness, that is, in his own mortal likeness*, in contradiction to the glorious and immortal likeness of God, in which the foregoing verses tell us he was first made; Gen. v. 1—3. Then the scripture goes on to prove it, by shewing how this death was executed: There is a plain account follows of the natural death of Adam, and a long succession of the deaths of his posterity, as being made mortal in the image of Adam, their natural head. And as I have shewn before, that not only life, but health and ease, and the comforts of life being the free gifts of God our Creator, they are all forfeited by the offence of his creature against him: And all the pains, and sorrows, and sicknesses of this life, which by degrees tend to wear out nature, and to bring man down to the dust, may be justly supposed to be implied in this threatening of death. And as this natural death of the body is plainly implied in the first threatening as a penalty for sin, to come upon Adam and his posterity; so not only all the books of Moses, but perhaps all the Old Testament, do scarce afford us any instances wherein

the word *death*, properly and without a figure, is taken to signify any thing else plainly but the sorrows and miseries of this life, and the final deprivation of life itself; though, in the first threatening tacitly, it may include the forfeiture of every thing God had before given, so far as God pleased to resume it. See note, question IX. section VI.

II. The next thing our divines have usually included in the word dying, is *spiritual death*, which has been generally extended to signify the anguish of a guilty conscience, the loss of the divine image in holiness, with the loss of the divine favour, and the infliction of new sorrows on the soul. Let us consider each of these apart, and see how far they may be included in the first threatening.

1. The *anguish of conscience* can never belong to any but the personal transgressor himself, because it consists in the uneasy and painful reflections of the mind of him that has sinned, charging himself with his own act of folly and disobedience. This is the natural effect or consequent of personal sin, and not so properly the threatened penalty of the law. This anguish does not come upon the offspring of Adam by imputation on the account of the first sin, for it can never be imputed to another person by any representation or suretyship: Nor can it ever be conveyed or transmitted by any natural propagation or descent; for, in the nature of things, anguish of conscience can only belong to the very person who is conscious of his own actual folly and rebellion, which another person can never be conscious of*. But though this cannot be communicated to the offspring of Adam, on account of his sin; yet when they become personal sinners, they feel this anguish of conscience also arising from their own actual transgressions, as the natural consequence of a guilty mind.

2. The *loss of the image of God in holiness* is another thing contained in spiritual death, and in the New Testament this is termed by St. Paul, *a death in trespasses and sins*; Eph. ii. 1. It consists in the corruption of human nature, and a bias or propensity toward evil. But this cannot be so properly threatened as the penalty of the law to be inflicted for the sin of Adam; for the holy and righteous God cannot be the author of

* By the way we may take notice here, that though infants have the sin of Adam so far imputed to them, as to fall under the sentence of death; and though the sins of the world were so far imputed to Christ, the second Adam, as to expose him to sufferings of soul and body, and to the accursed death, yet neither infants nor our blessed Lord ever had, nor can have, any anguish of conscience, because this arises only from the actual and personal sin striking the mind of the actual and personal transgressor with sharp reflexions and inward remorse, as conscious of his own fault. We may all be grieved and sorry that Adam our father sinned, but we cannot have painful inward remorse, reproaches or self-reflections, on the account of the sin or sins which we ourselves never committed.

sin in his creatures; he cannot infuse sin into the nature of man, nor take away his virtues by any divine act, or make him vicious*. This must therefore be only esteemed as a natural effect or consequent of man's first sin, as I have shewn under questions III. and IX.

3. The soul's loss of the favour of God, is another part of spiritual death: The loss of the manifestations of God's love, of friendly converse with him, and any peculiar instances of his grace, may be included in the word spiritual death; 1 John iii. 14. *He that loveth not his brother abideth in death:* And perhaps this may be also included in that scriptural expression; Eph. ii. 1—3. because they who *are dead in trespasses and sins are said to be children of wrath,* or obnoxious to the divine anger. The words *indignation and wrath, &c.* in Rom. ii. 8. where the terms of the covenant of works are recited, seem to intimate that this may possibly be included in the word death, as a threatened part of the punishment, and reaches to the soul as well the body, and that even after its separation from the body as well as before. The favour of God was certainly forfeited in a legal manner, by the sin of the first man; this is a proper punishment for sin: For we cannot suppose that God, the righteous Governor of the world, will always treat a criminal as he does an innocent person; but will both threaten and manifest some tokens of his displeasure against him, in order to maintain his authority and government.

4. And not merely the punishment of loss, or the withdrawing of the sense of divine love, but the punishment of sense, as the schools call it, that is, actual pain, sorrow, signified by the words *tribulation and anguish,* may be impressed upon the soul by God himself, or by good or evil angels, as his ministers; and this is a proper legal penalty due to sin, and may be included in this *spiritual death.* In this sense the devil may be called *the angel of death, or he who has the power of death*; Heb. ii. 14. as well as that he has power sometimes to kill the body. Under this head we may partly include the fear or dread of all these evils, or of any of them.

These four things then may be included in *spiritual death*; the two first of them as the natural consequences or effects of sin foretold, and the two last as proper punishments threatened: And the dread of them is partly a natural effect as well as a punishment. Let us proceed now to the third distinction of death, as it is explained by our chief authors who treat on divine things.

III. *Eternal death* consists in the misery both of soul and body, in the invisible world, and in a future state: Thus it is

* See question IX. section II.

generally explained by our writers, and has been often said be included in the penalty due to the first sin. Let us l enquire into it: First, Let us consider it as it relates to the of man. The soul is an immaterial and thinking being, it in itself no natural principles of dissolution; and therefor far as we can judge, it must be immortal in its own natu But who can say, whether the word death might not be fa construed to extend to the utter destruction of the life of soul as well as the body, if God the righteous Governor sho please to seize the forfeiture? For man by sin had forfeited that God had given him, that is, the life and existence of soul, as well as his body: All is forfeited by sin into the ha of God; and why might not the threatening declare the ri that even a God of goodness had to resume all back again, utterly destroy and annihilate his creatures for ever*. Th is not one place of scripture that occurs to me, where the w death, as it was first threatened in the law of innocency, cessarily signifies a certain miserable immortality of the s either to Adam the actual sinner, or to his posterity. I say do not remember any such text, but will not positively as there is none.

But suppose this *death* means the utter destruction of as well as of the body, to be a penalty due to every sin, for *wages of sin is death;* Rom. vi. 23. even the least sin or offe against God; yet where the sin of man hath any degree aggravation, perhaps the divine justice would not destroy soul, but would continue the soul in its natural immortality consciousness after the death of the body, to sustain fart punishments answerable to these aggravations: God may sume more or less of what man has forfeited by sin. And a point determined by our Saviour, that continuance in life misery is a greater punishment than annihilation; for he sa *It is better never to have been born*, than to be punished as Ju the traitor shall be punished; Mat. xxvi. 24.

And since there is scarce any actual sin but what has so aggravations, either greater or less, perhaps there is no act sinner, but has deserved some continuance of his soul in existence, consciousness and misery. And on this account death threatened by the covenant of works, especially to actual and personal transgressor, may perhaps, include in that *indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, whic due to every immortal soul that actually doth amiss,* πα ψυχην ανθρωπου κατεργαζομενου το κακον, *every soul that worketh e* Rom. ii. 8, 9. For as I shewed before, the apostle seems

* It is granted that God, considered merely as a sovereign and as just, m *resume all* from his creature, though he be without sin; but we can hardly th *a God of* goodness would do it, till sin had made a forfeiture.

here of justification and condemnation, by a law or cove-
f works.

it whether the great God would have actually continued
l of Adam the first sinner, in a state of existence after
and in a long immortality, to punish his actual offence, if
l not given him a new covenant, that is, a covenant of
and salvation, this is not plainly revealed nor determined
ture. It is certain that *the wages, or due recompence of
leath*, whether it mean an utter destruction of soul and
or else bodily death with a state of misery for the soul
he body is dead. The whole of our life and being and
, in soul and body, is forfeited by sin, and God may re-
more or less, as his wisdom shall direct, in order to punish
ty according to the greater or less aggravations or deme-
their crimes*.

condly, The other part of *eternal death*, or eternal misery,
in the raising the body up again from the dead, and re-
it to the soul, in order to be made eternally miserable
r with the soul, or rather to be an everlasting instrument
soul's misery and torment. But that this resurrection of
y to a state of misery, is threatened in the bible for the
nent of Adam's first sin, is what I cannot prove, nor do
' in what text of scripture to find it. The law of in-
' threatens death; but as the promise of life made to
cy was *immortality and eternal life* without need of
rection; Rom. ii. 7. so the threatening of death to sin
, that I can find, imply a resurrection. It was not
Gen. ii. 17. *Thou shalt surely die, and shalt rise again
sorrows.*

here are several places of scripture wherein the resurrec-
rather attributed to Christ, and to his undertaking in a
it of grace, besides that remarkable one; 1 Cor. xv. 21.
y man came death, so by man came the resurrection of
d:" But I know not of any one line in the word of God
ovides a miserable resurrection as the punishment threa-
o the offence of Adam. It is very probable therefore,
resurrection of the body was introduced by Christ, the
Adam upon another foot, namely, upon the gospel-
l of mercy to all mankind in the promise made to
after his fall, which has been usually called the first

is granted, that the first man standing under such a law and covenant
re explained, hath by sin forfeited all that he had, both life and being
he blessings of it, for himself and his posterity into the hands of his
o far as the rectoral wisdom or justice of God please to resume them;
ustly doubted whether the great God would inflict any penalties beyond
any punishment in a future world, on those who have no personal sin,
ly under the sentence of Adam's imputed sin. This will be debated
iteenth *question.*

gospel, or an epitome of the gospel of Christ: And whoso ever should refuse this grace, or abuse it by actual impenitence and indulgence of sin, should suffer punishment in sou and body for ever. This *is called the second death*; Rev xxi. 8. So that as the gospel or covenant of grace has provided hope and salvation by Jesus, the Mediator, for all tha would accept of it, whether under the Patriarchal, Jewish, o Christian dispensation; so those who continue impenitent, and will not return to God according to this new covenant, are exposed to double punishment under the government of the Mediator: and he will raise them from the dead to receive the reward of their obstinacy and impenitence, their violati of the law of God, and their neglect of all the means and hope of grace.

QUEST. XII.—*What doth the Holy Scripture reveal concerning the Recovery of Mankind from the Sin and Misery of that Estate into which they were brought by the disobedience of Adam? And how far does this Recovery reach, both with Regard to the Persons recovered, and with Regard to the Degrees of their Recovery?*

Perhaps this great and important enquiry may be answered by the following propositions and reasonings:

I. Adam the first man having sinned against God, and brought such a dishonour on the law and authority of his Maker, and tainted his seed with sin, he has thereby exposed himself and his posterity, that is, the whole race of mankind to death: *But God, who is rich in mercy, gave him a promise of a Redeemer or Saviour;* Gen. iii. 15. who should be *the seed of the woman, and should break the head of the serpent;* that is, *destroy the works of the devil, and deliver men* from that mischief and misery into which sin had plunged them, through the temptation of the devil, who lay hid in the serpent.

II. *God's own and only begotten Son Jesus Christ, who before the world was with God, who was one with the Father and was God,* was himself appointed by the Father, to become the Saviour of mankind, that all those might be recovered by pardoning grace to the favour of God, and raised at last to eternal life, who should repent of sin, and trust in the mercy of God, according to the several degrees of the discovery of it, which should be made in different nations and ages of the world, from the days of Adam to the days of christianity.

III. For this end God appointed this his Son, at a certain

ne to take *flesh and blood upon him, and to become* *to be born of a woman, that he might become the seed* *m*, according to his early promise made to fallen iii. 15.

d ordained and sent his Son to preach this gospel of faith and pardon, more clearly than ever before, and m to obey his law perfectly, and to suffer the sor- and death itself, instead of sinful man who broke t by his perfect obedience and by his sharp sufferings, ew how greatly God hated sin, and might vindicate of the law and majesty of God, which the sin of olated, and procure for men a discharge from those ie sustained, and obtain full salvation for sinful men. God, the Lord of heaven and earth, did not think it s dignity and his majesty, to pass by such grievous thout some glorious and terrible demonstration of his s, and his abhorrence of sin, even while he decided sinners: His justice, that is, his rectoral wisdom, it proper to exercise his mercy toward criminals, ie vindication of the wisdom and holiness of his bro- me reparation of his honour, and some recompence rity of his government, which had been injured by or would he receive the offending creature into his out such a Mediator, as could not only plead for the it could make atonement for his offence. It would us to enter into the proof of this atonement here. sufficient defences of it are written, and the epistles Peter, and John, are so express in this doctrine, that hink it needs no farther proof. This is set in a con- t in two treatises, viz. *Of Jesus the Mediator*; and *er and Sanctifier**.

r is it at all improper, or unbecoming the dignity f God, or the state of man, that God should set up ven his own Son, to be *the second Adam*, or a head salvation for multitudes, since it is evident that *one first Adam*, was the head or spring of sin, misery o multitudes. Both under the covenant of works he covenant of grace, the blessed God is pleased to affairs with men in and by a single person, who was head and representative of many thousands. And ere were most important reasons for this conduct of

it since this appointment of salvation by Jesus Christ,

he covenant of grace does not abolish the law of works, in the same- viz. *He that sins shall die*; though indeed the particular prohibi- *of the tree of knowledge* grows useless entirely upon Adam's expul- garden, and *his everlasting* absence from all the fruit there, which *his power to eat.*

was the mere effect of God's free mercy and sovereign good-will, therefore he was at liberty to appoint the exercise of his own grace, and the gift of this salvation to fallen man, in such ways and manners, under such limitations, with such terms or conditions, and in such degrees, as he pleased. Now, to set this matter in the clearest light I can, I would shew what were the measures or limitations of this grace or salvation provided for fallen man.

1. This grace or salvation did not extend so far as to abolish or destroy the general terms, commands or sanctions of the law of innocence, or the law of works, as it is called, under which Adam the first man was constituted. This general law is a law of nature and creation: It is founded in the very nature of things, and the relation between God and a creature, which requires all the creatures of God to yield perfect obedience to the whole will of their Maker, whether manifested by reason or revelation: And the penalty of this law abides still in force, in that it threatens the curse, or *death to every one that continues not in all things contained in this law;* Gal. iii. 10. and *the judgment of God*, or the δικαιωμα, the righteous sentence of the law, is, *That they who commit such things are worthy of death*; Rom. i. 32. *The wages, or reward, of sin, is death*; Rom. vi. 23. This death in general implies a forfeiture of life and being, and all the blessings of it, both in soul and body, as far as God is pleased to resume them, as I have shewn under questions IX. and XI.

2. As the law with its penalty, which threatens death to disobedience, is not abrogated, so the promise of eternal life to perfect obedience, which was superadded to the law, and turned it into a covenant, was not formally abrogated or abolished; though indeed it became unable to procure eternal life for any son or daughter of Adam, because they all were sinners: And there are some scriptures which seem to shew that this promise and covenant stand still in force; Gal. iii. 12. "The man that doth them shall live in them;" Rom. ii. 7. "To them who by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory, honour, and immortality," the law promises eternal life; Rom. viii. 3. "What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, &c." Observe, it was not weak in itself to give life; the law still remained capable of giving life to any man who could produce and shew a perfect obedience to it: But "it is weak only through the flesh," or the sinfulness of human nature and our impotence to fulfil the conditions of it.

3. Neither did this grace and salvation of Christ extend so far as to provide an immediate and present release of fallen *mankind*, nor of any part of them, from all that sin and misery *which* the disobedience of Adam had introduced into the world.

very representation of those scenes of iniquity and mis-
, sorrow and death, which attend all mankind, and which
been before exhibited, is a sufficient proof of the con-
nce and power of original sin all over the world, and the
lful effects and punishments of it; and shews that mankind
neral is not released from it, nor is any part of them imme-
ly and totally delivered. If therefore some of our divines,
they have been expounding the fifth chapter to the Romans,
been heard to say, that the obedience, the atonement and
of Christ have put an end to the effects of the sin of Adam,
brought in as extensive a blessing as Adam did a curse,
must not be supposed to mean that original sin, with all
sinful, painful and mortal effects of it in men, women and
ren, is as entirely done away, as though they had never been,
though Adam had not sinned: For this is contrary to the
ss of our senses, and the observation of our minds, every
f our lives.

4. Nor did this grace of God provide an absolute, certain
effectual salvation for all mankind from the penalties and
s of the broken law of innocence, for it is evident enough
all men will not be saved. But lest this method of grace
d be utterly ineffectual to all men, the blessed God, who
the universal degeneracy and corrupt principles of mankind,
d not leave it to such an uncertainty, whether any men
d be finally saved or no. It was not fit so glorious a provi-
or our salvation should be left in so doubtful a manner. And
ighly reasonable to think, that God foresaw, no man would
it and accept of this grace, if they were all entirely left to
own choice and their own follies. Therefore he resolved a
er should effectually accept of it.

Now had it been possible that such a number could be secured
indefinite manner, without appointing and naming every
ular person, perhaps God might have left it in such an in-
ite manner. But since that could not be done, therefore he
t necessary to provide an effectual security for some certain
letermined persons, which in scripture are called *the sheep
hrist, whom he must bring into his fold, and they shall hear
oice; the children given him, his church, the elect of God,
n before the foundation of the world; those who were given
hrist by the Father, those whose names were written in the
b's book of life: those which were predestinated or ordained
ernal life, who were redeemed from the earth, chosen to be
&c.* John x, 11, 14, 16. Rom. viii. 33. Eph. i. 4. John
). Rom. viii. 30. Heb. ii. 14. Acts xiii. 48. and many other
s, as Rev. xiv. 3, 4. and chapter v. 9.

And I cannot but make this observation in my reading of
New Testament, that though there are some scriptures which

seem favourable to both sides of the question about the *election of persons*, yet the texts which support this doctrine are more in number, and more plain, and express, and unanswerable, than those others which may seem to oppose this particular election of persons unto faith, holiness and salvation*.

5. And even these very persons for whom salvation was thus certainly and effectually provided, were not to be rescued in this world from all the miseries of the fall, but only from some of them: They were secured first from those evils which were most dreadful, and delivered from others by degrees. The effects of the fall or sin of man, under which these favourites or *elect of God* continue, are such as these, viz. God suffers them to come into the world with a sinful nature, uncured, unsanctified, and to continue under some evil operations and influences of this sinful nature all their lives, that they might conflict with it, and overcome it by his assistances: He appoints them also to continue during all this mortal life, subject to many pains, afflictions, sorrows, miseries, for wise ends and purposes, in this economy of grace; and at last, that their bodies should die, and turn to dust, according to the original threatening of death.

The deliverance or salvation which God provided for them, was, that they should be restored to the favour and image of God again, and brought at last to eternal life and happiness in this manner, viz. that they should have a most lively sense or perception of their own guilt and misery, and of the hope of mercy, so far as to encourage their repentance for past sins, and their return to God by a new obedience: And so far as the gospel of Christ came within their notice, they should learn the saving methods of grace by Christ Jesus: And to this end, all these things should be set before their minds by divine impressions on their understanding, as well as by the word; this is called *enlightening their minds*, in the knowledge of their sin and misery; and of the way of salvation by Christ. And yet further, that they should have their sinful natures in some measure sanc-

* I desire the friendly reader to observe, that I am not here discussing the controversy about the proof of *particular election*, &c. That has been done to much better purpose, and the doctrine itself effectually proved by many considerable writers, such as Mr. Calvin, Archbishop Usher, Doctor Owen, Doctor Goodwin, and others, among whom I name Mr. Baxter himself. But I am only endeavouring to try whether I cannot represent a plain and defensible scheme, wherein this doctrine will sit easy on the minds of men, without straining or torturing any text of scripture, and without pronouncing damnation on all the rest of mankind, by a certain and unavoidable sentence of death, for want of a Saviour. If it be enquired, why the all-wise and blessed God should suffer mankind to revolt from him at first by an universal apostacy, and why he should secure the recovery of so few out of all mankind from their state of sin and misery; there are some reasonable solutions given to this difficulty, by the writer of the *Strength and Weakness of Human Reason*, in the fourth conference.

ied or made holy here on earth by a great change wrought on them by God's Holy Spirit, which is called *regeneration*, *being born again;* that they should be enabled by the Spirit God to comply with all the proposals or necessary terms of is covenant of grace or salvation, which should be appointed em by God himself as Governor of the world, or by Jesus hrist his Son, as his great vicegerent, and *Lord of all:* That eir sins should be pardoned, both original and actual, so far as ever to be shut out of the favour of God, and the promise of ernal life on the account of them: yet that they should sustain ch sorrows and sufferings in their way to eternal happiness, as ight teach them the evil nature and the bitter fruits of sin, and degrees wean them from it: That they should have many as-stances, reliefs and comforts, under the difficulties and trials, rrows and miseries, which they should sustain in this life: hat their souls should be received into a holy and peaceful state, the presence of Christ in heaven, at the death of their bodies: nd that their bodies should be *raised again at the last day*, and rejoined to their souls, at which time they should be publicly quitted, and acknowledged as the sons of God, and be freed om all the unhappy effects and penalties of the fall of Adam, d be thenceforth made for ever happy in the presence of God. would be too tedious to cite all the scriptures which prove this; r they are scattered up and down every where in the New Tes-ment.

6. It seems also to be agreeable to the laws of nature and eation, that young children or infants, who are utterly incapa-e of knowing either the laws of God, or the discoveries and oposals of his mercy, and of complying with either of them in eir own persons, should be esteemed as a part of their parents, as one with their parents, as to all the purposes of this dis-ensation of grace, and the blessings which flow from it; and erefore God is called, *the God of Abraham, and the God of s seed*, in their successive generations; Gen. xvii. 7, 8. herefore the Gentiles, when converted to God, are said to be e *seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them;* s. lxv. 23. I do not stand now to give any longer proof of this atter, which has been so much controverted; but only add, it not at all strange that God should make his covenant of grace favourable and extensive to those children of pious persons, ho never live to be capable of knowing or transacting these acred affairs for themselves, since he has evidently so constituted , in a great measure, in the kingdom of nature, and in the king-om of providence; for in these it is evident, that children ften inherit the gout or the stone, a healthy and robust constitu-*on, or sickness and pain*, poverty or riches, disgrace or honour, *cording to the condition* and circumstances of their parents.

And since it was so constituted in the law of innocency, or the covenant of works, whereby all the children of men should have been established in happiness, if Adam their father had continued in his obedience, and whereby all the posterity of Adam are now born in sin and misery, and involved in his fall, when he became a rebel against his Maker; why may we not reasonably suppose, the mercy of God would extend as far as his justice? And why may not the happiness of the new covenant of grace be conveyed to the infant offspring of those who have accepted it, which die in their infancy, and can have no state of trial in their own persons?

7. Since the *Son of God, Jesus Christ*, was so very glorious a person in his own nature, one who *was with God, and was God*, one who had *all the fulness of the godhead dwelling in him bodily*, there was such an abounding merit in his perfect obedience to the law of God for four and thirty years together, his voluntary submission to so many sorrows and sufferings in his life, and afterwards his enduring death itself, which was the express penalty threatened for sin. I say, there was such a superabundant value and merit in these undertakings, arising from the dignity of his person and character, that these labours, and these sufferings, did not only procure absolute and certain salvation for the elect, according to the will and appointment of the Father, but they may justly be called sufficient in their own nature, to have obtained actual salvation for all mankind.

And though God did not think fit to appoint all mankind to be certainly and effectually saved thereby, yet this redundancy of the merit of Christ, this overflowing influence of his great undertaking, his obedience and his death, might be actually appointed and accepted by God the Father, to obtain the following benefits for men; and as far as common benefits reach, Christ may be said, *to die for all*; or to *taste death for every man*, in the language of scripture;* 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. Heb. ii. 9.

I. We may suppose it is owing to the exuberant merits of Christ, that this earth continues to be the habitation for mankind, and that the life of Adam and Eve were preserved some hun-

* Though there must be a very good sense in which Christ may be said to *die for all men*; because scripture uses this language; 2. Cor. v. 15. yet it does not follow that the doctrine of universal redemption is found there; I cannot find that scripture once asserts that *Christ redeemed all men, or died to redeem them all.* In the New Testament, however the word αγοραζω, *to buy*, may possibly be used and applied in a large sense, yet εξαγοραζω, *to redeem*, or λυτροω, I think, is never applied particularly to any but the Israel of God, or to those who do or shall actually receive the gospel, and partake of the salvation of Christ, as the purchase of his blood. None but those are plainly expressly said to be redeemed by Christ, in any text of the New Testament that I can find. Ηγορασε, *he bought, or paid a sufficient price for those who fell into damnable errors and heresies*; 2 Pet. ii. 1. *But it is never said*, he redeemed them: He bought them as a part of those *all things* whose dominion he obtained by his sufferings; Phil. ii. 9, 10. but not as his own people.

ireds of years after the day in which they first sinned, since the express word of threatening consigned them over to death immediately, *In the day* thou eatest thereof thou shalt die ; Gen. ii. 17. It is true, such a reprieve as this was necessary in order to the peopling of the world, and the propagation of mankind in their successive generations ; for had Adam and Eve died in the day when they sinned, the human nature would have been at an end, and have perished from this earth for ever : But it is most probably owing to the scheme of mercy, and the new covenant built upon the merit of Christ, that Adam and Eve were not destroyed that very day, and that God permitted a race of men to cover the face of the earth. So that every son and daughter of Adam, who is born into this world, is some proof that the extensive merit of the death of Christ reaches to them for some purposes.

II. It is owing to the superabundant merit of the obedience and sufferings of Christ, that the earth is appointed still and ordered to produce such a variety of supports and comforts for mankind in their successive generations, and that all the vegetable and animal powers on this earth, are not universally blasted by the curse : All the blessings of nature and providence that spring up from the earth, that descend from the heavens, that are brought forth or dispersed by the sun and the moon and the clouds, that are enjoyed and tasted by the sons and daughters of men in this world, are probably derived from this fountain of the blood of Christ ; and in this sense perhaps, he may be said to taste death for every man. And let it be observed, that these blessings reach to whole nations where we have but little reason to believe God has any chosen favourites, any of his own beloved children, any that are actually regenerated, adopted and sanctified to himself by special grace. Yet methinks every thing round about us seems to speak, that God has not utterly and absolutely abandoned all mankind to certain and necessary guilt and misery, besides the few whom he has chosen and secured to be certain subjects of his Son's kingdom : Every divine monument and instance of bounty and blessing round about us, seems to teach us that God is upon terms of grace and reconciliation with all the rebel race of his creature man.

III. That mankind have the common faculties of nature continued to them, is to be ascribed to the undertaking of Christ : That they have the use of their senses and their limbs in any measures of health, ease, vigour, and activity ; for these were all forfeited by sin, and included in the word death. All this is owing probably to Christ. And that they have any exercise of reason, that they have any measures of wisdom or prudence amongst them in the conduct of their affairs, may be ascribed also to the same spring, and perhaps this was designed in that

text; John i. 4, 9. wherein we are told that *the word was the light, and the life of men*, and he was that *light that lighteth every man who cometh into this world.*

IV. That there are any sparks of natural virtue, any remains of benevolence, goodness or compassion towards one another in the hearts of men, is probably the fruit of the mediation of Christ: That there are any social virtues among them, that there is any conscience of probity, equity and justice, that mankind relieves and helps one another, that there is any such thing as government among men, and that all the sons and daughters of Adam, in all nations, are not mere savages, are not like wolves and bears to each other; and in short, that this earth is not a mere wilderness, or a hell of mischief and misery, is owing to restraining grace, and the redundant merit of the sufferings and death of Christ; or at least it may probably be so, nor can we give a better account of it.

That all mankind have had a gospel revealed to them, or a covenant of grace proposed to their acceptance at first, in and by Adam their father, and conveyed by way of tradition to his posterity; surely this must be acknowledged to proceed from the generous undertaking of Christ. I speak here concerning those who are not elected, as well as those who are; for it has been designedly manifested to those who refuse, as well as those who accept. It seems to me to be owing to the overflowing merit of Christ, that all mankind are not buried in the same gross and brutal ignorance of God, and of themselves, as the darkest and vilest corners of the world are. It is owing probably to this spring, that all mankind ever had pardon, grace and salvation proposed to them in the first promise made to Adam, in the covenant made to Noah, and in the gospel or hope of salvation, which he, who was *a preacher of righteousness*, doubtless communicated to his posterity, that is, to all the world.

It is owing to the same grace and purchase of Christ, that ever this promise should be again repeated to Abraham, and in some sense to all the nations of the earth by him; for in him *all the nations of the earth are blessed*; Gen. xxii. 18. It is an effect of the merit of Christ, that ever there should be so many further discoveries of grace to the Jewish nation, even to the profane as well as to the pious among them, and that not only by *Moses and the prophets, but by Christ himself*; and that ever this gospel should be published to the nations of the world, in the brightest edition of it, by the apostles of Christ, and *the glad tidings of salvation* proclaimed to the heathens, who *sat in thick darkness, and lay under the shadow of death*, and even to those among them who never accepted it. It is owing to this redundancy of merit in his death, that so many whole nations are called to repent, and to trust in the mercy of a God through a Saviour:

n the non-elect, as well as those that are elected: And that his day, the gospel should be continued to the nations who e so many years and ages abused it; that the ministry of the d should call whole kingdoms to be reconciled to God by a diator, to trust in the merit of Christ, to receive Jesus, as ir Saviour and their Lord, to accept of pardon of sin and eter- happiness, upon the terms which the gospel reveals.

VI. It is probably owing to the same undertaking of Christ, l the overflowing value of his righteousness and death, that re are so many means of grace and divine assistances, both ward and inward, afforded to whole nations where the gospel nes; that even those who are not elected, have so many akening providences, so many peculiar opportunities of mercy, many excellent sermons preached to them, so many suitable rds spoken both from the law and the gospel, as it were to ir own souls. It is surely from this mediation of Christ, that y have their consciences at any time impressed with divine ngs, and excited to reprove them for sin, and to seek after vation; that they have so many common workings of the oly Spirit, and his blessed influences upon their hearts, to make em bethink themselves about their eternal concernments, to e them some knowledge of Christ the Saviour, and to stir em up to the duties of faith and repentance, and new obedi- ce: and that they are not only exhorted outwardly by the word, t inwardly by some common and general operations of the oly Spirit, to receive this salvation. Could all these blessings really bestowed upon sinful men by the faithful and merciful od, if the original, and eternal, and only design of them were erely to render them so much the more heinously criminal, and more extremely miserable, without any possibility of hope or covery ever included in these blessings, or intimated by them?

VII. In the last place, it is owing to the most redundant rit of Christ our Lord, that such a conditional pardon and vation, or such conditional propositions of peace as the gospel presses, were ever provided for them who were not elected; se are set forth in such general proposals and offers as we d in the bible: *Whosoever believeth shall be saved: Whosoever l, let him come and take the water of life freely: Ho, every e that thirsteth, &c. Look unto me and be saved, all ye ends the earth, &c.* If there were no such blessing provided for em, so much as in a conditional manner, surely it could never really and actually, and expressly offered to them. Surely e righteous, the gracious, and the holy God does not tantalize s perishing and miserable creatures, nor send his gospel and s ministers to offer them a mere nullity instead of a benefit? hrist does not call them in his gospel to receive an empty thing, when his words propose to them a solid blessing. He

does not invite them to trust in a Saviour for something which this Saviour was never entrusted with to be bestowed upon them, even if they did repent: or to hope in him for a verbal salvation which has nothing real in it, that is, for a mere word or name without a meaning, or a promise without a blessing in it. But because this is a question of great importance, I shall treat it more distinctly.

QUEST. XIII.—*How far has the glorious Undertaking of our Lord Jesus Christ provided any Hope of Salvation for those who were not eternally chosen, and given into the Hands of Christ, to be redeemed and saved?*

The enquiry here is not, whether any of them who are not originally chosen of God, shall be finally saved. The event though it be known to God, yet it is left to be determined by their own choice, or refusal of this salvation. God himself has put no effectual and insurmountable bar, or rather no bar at all, in their way, to prevent their acceptance of his grace. His chusing other persons who were fellow-sinners, to make them certain partakers of this grace, is no hinderance to those who were not chosen, from accepting the same. It is my opinion that there is such a thing as *a general sufficiency of pardon, grace, and happiness, provided for all mankind by Jesus Christ*: And it is left to their own natural powers, under common helps, to accept or refuse it. That there is such a conditional salvation, and such real offers of eternal life procured by the overflowing merit of Christ, I think may be proved by these following considerations:

I. It is very hard to vindicate the sincerity of the blessed God, or his Son, in their universal offers of grace and salvation to men, and their sending ministers with such messages and invitations to accept of mercy, if there be not such a conditional pardon and salvation provided for them. It is granted that the ministers who are sent to preach this gospel, and offer this grace of salvation to the non-elect, may be very sincere in their ministry, for they know not whom God has chosen, and for whom he has provided this special grace; and therefore they offer it to all persons, according to their general commission; Mark xvi. 15. *Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, &c.* But how can God, or Christ, be sincere in sending their ministers with this commission, to offer this grace to all men, if they know that God has never provided such grace or salvation for any but the elect, no, not so much as conditionally?

It is hard to suppose that the great God, who is truth itself, and sincere and faithful in all his dealings, should call upon dying

men to trust in a Saviour for eternal life, when this Saviour has not eternal life entrusted with him to give them, if they do repent: It is hard to conceive how the great Governor of the world can be sincere in inviting and requiring sinners who are on the brink of hell, to cast themselves upon an empty word of invitation, a mere shadow and appearance of support, if there be nothing real to bear them up from those deeps of destruction, nothing but mere words and empty invitations. Can we think that the righteous and holy God would encourage his ministers to call them to lean and rest the weight of their immortal concerns and happiness upon a gospel, a covenant of grace, a Mediator, and his merit and righteousness, &c. all which are a mere nothing with regard to them, a heap of empty names, an unsupporting void which cannot uphold them? When our blessed Redeemer charges the Jews with aggravated guilt for refusing his grace, can we suppose he had no such grace in his hand to offer them? Or when he, as it were, consigns them over to death, because, says he, *ye will not come unto me that ye may have life*; John v. 40. can we suppose he has no eternal life, not so much as a conditional grant of it in his hands for them?

By the way I cannot but take notice here, that in order to avoid these hard and absurd consequences of the *calls of grace and offers of salvation where none is really provided*, some persons chuse rather roundly to assert, there are *no calls of grace, no offers of pardon or salvation at all in the word of God, to any but the elect*: And I think of the two it is the more defensible or consistent doctrine, though it seems to run counter to a great many plain scriptures in the Old Testament and the New; for there are many texts wherein pardon and salvation are proposed to all sinners whatsoever, without any regard whether they are chosen of God or no: And it is the design and voice of the whole current of scripture, to call sinners to repentance by promises of mercy, and to enforce that which Isaiah speaks, chapter lv. 6, 7. *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found: Call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.* And what our Lord himself pronounces in his personal ministry has the same design, when he calls to all the sinners in Galilee, *repent and believe the gospel, for I come not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*; Mark ii. 17. And St. Peter and St. Paul, his two chief messengers or apostles, call all the crucifiers of Christ in general, and the heathen nations, to *repent and be converted, that their sins might be blotted out*; and to *believe in the name of the Lord Jesus, that they may be saved*; Acts iii. 19. and xiii. 38. and xvii. 30. *He commands all men every where to repent*; Rom. x. 11, 13. while our Savi-

our most expressly informs us; Mat. xxii. 14. *that many are called, but few are chosen.* Yet, I think, we must cancel all these scriptures, and deny all offers of grace and salvation made to sinners in general if Christ procured and provided nothing for them; or we must grant that there is a conditional salvation provided for all mankind, in order to justify the sincerity of God and his Son in the public call and general invitation given to sinners to repent and accept of this salvation.

II. It is very hard to defend the sincerity of the Spirit of God, in awakening the consciences of these persons sometimes, who are not elected, and stirring them up to think of receiving the salvation of Christ upon the terms of the gospel, if there be no such salvation conditionally provided for them to receive: It is hard to suppose that God should send his own Spirit to excite the consciences of such sinners in any common degrees to any repentings for sin, even in the most legal sense, and to bring them near to the kingdom of heaven in the beginnings of conviction and sorrow, if there was no pardon provided in any sense for those who are not chosen, whether they repent or no; or that the Spirit should give them any, even the weakest excitations, to trust in the merit of a Saviour, if that merit has obtained no blessing for them, not so much as conditional. Shall it be ever said, that God the Father, and his Son and Spirit have each done their parts to encourage and excite non-elect sinners to trust in the gospel for salvation, or the least grace or salvation in a conditional sense provided for them to trust in or to accept of?

III. It is equally difficult to vindicate the equity of God, as the judge of all men, in condemning unbelievers, and punishing them eternally for not accepting the offers of pardon, if there was not so much as a conditional pardon provided for them; and for not resting on the merit of Christ, and receiving his salvation, when there was no such merit appointed for them to rest upon, nor any such salvation for them to receive. Surely it will appear in the day of judgment, that the final condemnation of sinners, and their eternal misery, was merely the fruit of their own negligence and disobedience to the voice of the gospel, and refusing the offered grace, and not to any real want of sufficient provision made for them by him who calls them to receive it. The language of Christ, in his ministry to sinners, is, *Come to this feast of the gospel, for all things are ready;* Mat. xxii. 4. *This is the condemnation, that when light came into the world, they loved darkness rather than light*; John iii. 18, 19. Men are expressly condemned *because they would not believe in Christ, nor come unto him that they might have life*; chapter v. 40. and therefore *they die in their sins*, as the apostle John often represents, chapter viii. 21, 24. Surely the Lord Jesus would never be sent *in flaming fire* to render vengeance on *them that obey*

not the gospel; 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. in the commands of it, nor receive this salvation, if there was no sufficient salvation provided in that gospel which commands them to receive it.

It will render this consideration much more forcible, when we observe, that there is a much severer condemnation and more dreadful punishment threatened to those who have heard of this grace and never laid hold of it, in proportion to the degree of light in which this grace was set before them. It is said, *It shall be less tolerable for the cities which refused to receive the gospel that Christ preached, than for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment;* Mat. xi. 22, 24. and *they that despise the gospel of Christ, of how much sorer punishment suppose ye shall they be thought worthy, than those who despised the law of Moses?* Heb. x. 28, 29. So that their enjoying the proposals of this grace and this gospel makes their case much worse than if they had never enjoyed it; and can we think that the righteous Judge of the world will merely send words of grace and salvation amongst them, on purpose to make his creatures so much the more miserable, when there is no real grace or salvation contained in those words, for them who refuse to receive it? It is very hard indeed to vindicate the righteousness of the sentence of their double condemnation and punishment, for the refusal of pardon and salvation, if there was not so much as a conditional pardon, and a conditional salvation provided for them.

IV. It is very hard to suppose, that when the word of God, by the general commands, promises, threatenings, given to all men whatsoever, and often repeated therein, represents mankind as in a state of probation*, and in the way towards eternal rewards or eternal punishments, according to their behaviour in this life: I say, it is hard to suppose all this should be no real and just representation, but a mere amusement: That all these proposals of mercy, and displays of the gracious dealings of God, should be an empty shew with regard to all the millions of mankind, besides the few that are chosen to happiness; and that they should really be so fixed in a wretched, hopeless, and deplorable state under the first sin of the first man, that they are

* I know it has been the opinion of some persons, that this life is not properly alled a state of probation or trial of men for eternity, because the final event is ot uncertain, since it is known to God already, and partly determined by him: nd yet these very persons will say, that a season of affliction or temptation is a ason of trial to the people of God; for so it is often called in scripture; 2 Cor. ii. 2. Heb. xi. 36 and 1 Pet. iv. 12. and 1 Pet. i. 7. it is called, *The trial of our ith*, &c. Now I would fain know, whether the event of every season of trial every kind of men, whether of saints or sinners, be not known to God, and this sense it is not uncertain; and yet scripture, with much propriety, calls e one a season of trial: and I see no reason to exclude the other from the same ame, especially since the sacred writers use it for wicked men also. Rev. iii. 0. *I will keep thee from the hour of temptation*, or trial, *which shall come upon all e world, to try them which dwell upon the earth.*

utterly irrecoverable from the ruins of it; and that even as unalterably so as devils are, without any hope of recovery from their state of guilt and misery, for whom there was no Saviour provided, and whom God has not treated in this way of precept, promise and threatening. Is there not a plain difference made in scripture, between *the angels who sinned, whom God spared not, but cast them down from heaven into chains of darkness, and mankind who sinned*, to whom God gives time and space for repentance, means of grace, offers of pardon, conditional promises of salvation, with a command to all men to accept of it? What can manifest the blessed God to be upon terms of mercy with them, if this does not?

V. This seems to be a fair and easy way to answer several of those texts of scripture, which represent God as *the Saviour of all men, especially of them who believe;* 1 Tim. iv. 10. and assert, that *God calls and commands all men every where to repent;* Acts xvii. 30. That *Christ tasted death for every man;* Heb. ii. 9. That *he gave himself a ransom for all men; to be testified in due time;* 1 Tim. ii. 6. That *he died for all;* 2 Cor. v. 15. That *he gave himself to be the propitiation for the sins of the whole world;* 1 John ii. 2. and *the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world;* chapter iv. 14. and that *God so loved the world* of mankind, *that he sent his Son, not to condemn the world, but that through him the world might be saved;* and that *whosoever believes in his Son Jesus, should not perish, but should have eternal life;* John iii. 16, 17.

I grant indeed, that many of these scriptures may have a pretty sufficient answer given to them by the art of criticism, even upon the supposition that salvation is provided only for the elect; but there are some few of those scriptures, and of their parallel places, which can never be so well explained, but by supposing the death of Christ has such an all-sufficient and overflowing merit in it, as to provide a sufficient conditional pardon, and conditional salvation for the non-elect, while it also provides absolute, effectual and certain pardon and salvation for those whom God has elected. It seems evident to me from several texts of the word of God, that Christ did not die with an equal design for all men; but that there is a special number whom the Father chose and gave to the Son, whose salvation is absolutely secured by the death and intercession of Christ; John xvii. 6, 9, 10. but why should this hinder our interpretation of some other texts in a more general and catholic sense, where the love of God and Christ to mankind, are expressed in more universal phrases and terms? Why should we affect to limit that grace which is expressed in an unlimited form of speech? Why may we not suppose conditional pardon and conditional salvation, and the offers of the gospel, and the means of grace which are neces-

y to it, to be the purchase of the death of Christ, since the ath of so glorious a person has such an exuberant value in it, d such all-sufficient merit; and especially since it is allowed to perabound so far as to purchase the continuance of the world, d common blessings of life for mankind?

Here let it be observed, that when the remonstrants assert at Christ died for all mankind, merely to purchase conditional lvation for them, and when those * who profess to be the rictest Calvinists, assert Christ died only and merely to procure solute and effectual pardon and salvation for the elect, it is not cause the whole scripture every where expressly or plainly veals or asserts the particular sentiments of either of these cts, with an exclusion of the other; but the reason of these ferent assertions of men is this, that the holy writers in differ-t texts, pursuing different subjects, and speaking to different rsons, sometimes seem to favour each of these two opinions†, d men being at a loss to reconcile them by any medium, run to different extremes, and entirely follow one of these tracks of ought, and neglect the other. But surely, if there can be a ay found to reconcile these two doctrines of the absolute salva-n of the elect, by the obedience, righteousness and death of hrist procuring it for them, with all things necessary to the ssession of it, and also of the conditional salvation provided all mankind, and offered to them in the gospel, through the l-sufficient and overflowing value of the obedience and suffer-gs of Christ: this will be the most fair, natural and easy way reconciling these different texts of scripture, without any ain or torture put upon any of them.

Nor indeed can I conceive why the remonstrant should be easy to have pardon and salvation absolutely provided for the ct, since all the rest of mankind, especially such as hear the spel, have the same conditional salvation which they contend ; sincerely proposed to their acceptance; nor can I see any son why the strictest Calvinist should be angry, that the all-ficient merit of Christ should overflow so far in its influence, o provide conditional salvation for all mankind, since the elect God have that certain and absolute salvation which they con-d for, secured to them by the same merit; and especially ce that great and admirable reformer, John Calvin, whose

* I say, *those who profess to be the strictest Calvinists;* not that they do ly come nearest to Calvin's sentiments and language; for Calvin himself frequently intimated in his comments on scripture, that Christ did in some se die for all men. See the end of this fifth consideration.

† This is a most evident truth, that scripture, in different parts of it, seems its expressions to favour each of these opinions; otherwise it could never be, t the writers of the different parties should each of them bring so many texts support and vindicate their own sentiments, and which plainly give so much iculty and perplexity to the writors of the opposite side to answer them.

name they affect to wear, and to whose authority they pay so great a regard, has so plainly declared in his writings, that there is a sense in which Christ died for the sins of the whole world, or all mankind; and he sometimes goes so far as to call this the redemption of all. See his comments on the following scriptures*.

Mat. xxvi. 8. *This is my blood of the New Testament, which was shed for many for the remission of sins.* Sub multorum nomine non partem mundi tantum designat, sed totum humanum genus. Under the name of many, he signifies not a part of the world only, but all mankind.

Rom. v. 18. "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all to condemnation, so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life." Communem omnium gratiam facit quia omnibus exposita est, non quod ad omnes extendatur re ipsa: Nam etsi passus est Christus pro peccatis totius mundi, atque omnibus indifferenter Dei benignitate offertur, non tamen omnes apprehendunt. He makes this grace common to all, because it is set before all, though not really and in fact reached out to all. For though Christ suffered for the sins of the whole world, and he is offered indifferently to all by the bounty of God, yet all do not receive him.

1 Cor. viii. 11, 12. *Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died?* On which Calvin remarks thus: If the soul of every weak person was the purchase of the blood of Christ, he that for the sake of a little meat, plunges his brother again into death who was redeemed by Christ, shews at how mean a rate he esteems the blood of Christ.

1 John ii. 2. *He is the propitiation for our sins; and not for our's only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* Hic movetur quæstio, quomodo mundi totius peccata expientur?—aliqui dixerunt——Sufficienter pro toto mundo passum esse Christum, sed pro electis tantum efficaciter. Vulgo hæc solutio in scholis obtinuit: Ego quanquam verum esse illud dictum fateor, nego tamen præsenti loco quadrare. Here a question is raised, How can the sins of the whole world be expiated? Some have said, Christ suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but effectually for the elect alone. This is the common solution of the schools: And though I confess this is a truth, yet I do not think it agrees to this place.

2 Pet. ii. 1. There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

* It may be proper to observe here, that some of the most rigid and narrow limitations of grace to men are found chiefly in his *institutions*, which were written in his youth. But his comments on scripture were the labours of his riper years and maturer judgment.

Tametsi variis modis abnegatur Christus, eum tamen hic, meo judicio, attingit Petrus, qui exprimitur apud Judam: nempe, dum gratia Dei in lasciviam convertitur. Redemit enim nos Christus, ut populum haberet segregatum ab omnibus mundi inquinamentis, addictum sanctitati & innocentiæ. Qui igitur excusso fræno, in omnem licentiam se projiciunt, non immerito dicuntur Christum abnegare, a quo redempti sunt. That is, though Christ is denied many ways, yet in my opinion Peter means the same thing here which Jude expresses, viz. that the grace of God is turned into wantonness: for Christ hath redeemed us, that he might have a people free from all the defilements of the world, and devoted to holiness and innocence: Whosoever therefore shake off the yoke, and throw themselves into all licentiousness, are justly said to deny Christ, by whom they were redeemed.

Jude, verse 4. "Turning the grace of our God into wantonness, and denying the only Lord God, and Jesus Christ our Lord. Christum vero abnegari intelligit, quum hi qui sanguine illius redempti fuerant, diabolo se rursus mancipantes, incomparabile illud pretium quantum in se irritum faciunt. The apostle here means that Christ is denied, when these who were redeemed with his blood, again enslave themselves to the devil, and, as far as in them lies, make that incomparable price vain and ineffectual. Thus it appears, that Calvin himself thought that Christ and his salvation are offered to all, and that in some sense he died for all. But I proceed to the last consideration.

VI. That all mankind have some conditional salvation provided for them, and some real grace and pardon offered to them by a new covenant, appears from this, that all men, both wicked and righteous, *or just and unjust, shall be raised from the dead, to give an acount of things done in the body, whether good or evil*, and to receive rewards or punishments in their body, as well as in their souls, according to their improvement or misimprovement of the dispensations under which they have lived. This seems to be the sense of several scriptures; John v. 28, 29. 2 Cor. v. 10. Now a resurrection is by no means provided by the law of innocency or the covenant of works: That only threatens death for sin, without the least hint or thought of the body's rising again. This doctrine of the resurrection therefore seems to be the effect of the overflowing merit of Christ, and perhaps that expression of the apostle may have some reference to it. 1 Cor. xv. 21, 22. *Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive;* though I confess it may be also construed and confined only to the resurrection of the saints. But it is evident that Jesus Christ has this power to raise the dead, even sinners as well as saints, and *authority to judge all*

the world, given him of the Father as a Mediator, or because he is the Son of Man.—And all that are in the graves—shall come forth; they who have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation; John v. 25—29. They who have believed in Christ, and obeyed him, shall be raised up at last to happiness; but those who have disobeyed the gospel, shall be raised in order to be *punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord*; 2 Thess. i. 9.

Nor surely this resurrection of all mankind must be built upon the foot of a new covenant given or offered to all mankind, since the old covenant of innocency, or the law of works, appoints eternal life without dying for the obedient, and death without a resurrection for the disobedient. Such a covenant therefore as admits natural death to seize even upon those who are obedient to it, and provides a resurrection even for those who are disobedient, must needs be a different covenant from the law of works, which admits, no death for the one, nor provides any resurrection for the other. There was therefore doubtless a general proclamation of pardon and salvation to all mankind, who were fallen in Adam, contained in the first promise, or the gospel that was preached to Adam, the first father of mankind, by God himself, in the garden after his fall: And this was again preached to all the world by Noah, the second father of mankind, and a preacher of righteousness; otherwise I think the resurrection would not reach to every man and woman in the world. Let it be considered also, that this very resurrection of the bodies of sinful mankind, brings with it an additional penalty and misery, beyond what the law of innocency threatened, even the everlasting punishment of the new-raised body, and the soul as united to it. Now this cannot, with such evident justice, be inflicted upon the non-elect, if they are under no other covenant but that of innocency, or the law of works, because no such punishment is threatened or implied in that law, as far as I can read it.

Nor would there have been any such thing as sinners arising from the dead, that we can find in the bible, if Christ Jesus had not taken upon him to be a Mediator between God and fallen man, so far as to set mankind upon some new foot of hope; and thus unbelievers and impenitent persons are punished in their new-raised bodies, for rejecting this hope. For since the broken law or covenant of works leaves the body under the power of death for ever, we can hardly suppose that the Son of God, the chief minister of his Father's grace, would provide a resurrection of the body for breakers of that original law, merely to put them to severer punishments and more intense torments, than that broken law threatened, if there were not some advantage in the nature of things, derived to them from his mediation,

balance it: Now what equal advantage is there to balance this rerer punishment, if there be not some conditional hope of eir recovery from the misery of their fallen state, upon suppo-ion that they sincerely endeavour to perform all the duties of is new covenant, as far as the revelation of them comes within eir notice; that is, that they repent of their sins, and trust in e divine grace and forgiveness, in order to their acceptance.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, the righteous and appointed Judge, ll never give occasion for any of all the miserable multitude to y, that they are condemned to an endless punishment in their w-raised bodies, for breaking God's original law of innocency, hich punishment was never threatened in that law. He will ver give them reason to complain, that, with regard to them, came not to be a Mediator or a Saviour, but merely to add their misery, by a resurrection to eternal pain, without any uivalent of hope: Or that he came to expose them to double mnation for refusing his grace, when he had none for them to cept. The goodness and equity of God, and his Son, will ver suffer such an imputation to fall upon any part of their nsactions: And as they have both agreed in pronouncing ese words; John iii. 17. *God sent not his Son into the world condemn the world, but that the world through him might be ved**; they will both agree also in such a conduct, as shall not much as appear to run counter to such a solemn expression of ace, or to the common notions and rules of justice.

Since therefore it appears pretty evident, that Jesus, the ghteous Judge, will not condemn sinners for refusing that grace d that salvation, which had no reality in things, and which was ver really offered to their acceptance, nor so much as provided; d since he will never punish sinners by the mere law or cove-nt of works, with the punishment of a resurrection of the dy, which were never threatened nor included in that law or venant; we must conclude, according to the representation of ripture, according to the rules of justice, and the reason of ings, that there must be some other covenant, some covenant grace and salvation, under which all men are situated, and hich has really been offered to all mankind, either in clearer or more obscure notices thereof; such a covenant, whereby the surrection of the body to eternal happiness, is the appointed ward of those who receive this offered salvation; and whereby e resurrection of the body to eternal misery, is the appointed nishment of those who refuse to comply with the grace of at dispensation under which they are placed, and neglect to

* If the word *world* in the two or three first places, signifies *mankind* without stinction, why should the *world* in the last place signify only the elect? Is not conditional or indefinitive salvation here intimated to be provided for mankind, hether *they be Jews or Gentiles.*

receive this salvation. Thus I think I have proved it pretty clearly, at least to my own satisfaction, that the non-elect among men are not predestinated to eternal misery by any absolute act of reprobation, nor are they left in the state of fallen angels or devils, for whom there is no Saviour appointed, and who cannot have any reasonable hope; but that there is a conditional salvation provided for all men, and offered to them in the gospel, by the glorious all-sufficiency and redundance of the merit of Christ.

The doctrine of reprobation, in the most severe and absolute sense of it, stands in such a direct contradiction to all our notions of kindness and love to others, in which the blessed God is set forth as our example, that our reason cannot tell how to receive it. Yet, if it were never so true, and never so plainly revealed in scripture, it would only be a doctrine which might require our humble assent, and our silent submission to it, with awful reverence of the majesty and sovereignty of the great God. But it is by no means a doctrine, in which we, as men, could or should rejoice and glory, or take pleasure in it; because it hath so dreadful an aspect on far the greatest part of our fellow-creatures, considered as mere creatures. Nor do I think the blessed God would require us so far to divest ourselves of humanity, as to take a secret satisfaction in the absolute and eternal appointment of such numbers of our kindred in flesh and blood, to everlasting perdition: Much less should we make this awful and terrible article a matter of our public boast and triumph, even if we could prove it to be revealed, but rather mourn for it. And since there are so many expressions of scripture, that give us reason to think that Christ lived and died in some respects as a common Mediator of mankind, though with a peculiar regard to the elect, methinks this doctrince of the extensive goodness of God, is a much more desirable opinion, and should be more chearfully received by us, as it is so agreeable to our duty of charity to all men, and seems so necessary to us at present, for vindicating the justice, goodness, and sincerity of the blessed God, in his transactions with mankind. When therefore I hear men talk of the doctrine of reprobation, with a special gust and relish, as a favourite article, I cannot but suspect their good temper, and question whether they *love their neighbour as they do themselves*. The case is very different when saints are called in scripture to rejoice in the public judgments of God, exercised upon the antichristian state, or upon the wicked oppressors, and incorrigible sinners of the world: For that is the effect of God's equity and righteousness, as a wise and faithful Governor; but this would be an instance merely of his dreadful sovereignty and terror, and hardly consistent with goodness.

I would ask leave also in this place to enquire, what great *advantages* can be derived to religion or christianity, by ende-

ıg to limit the extent of the death of Christ, and to take all manner of hopes, and prayers, and endeavours from the lect. Does the doctrine of election of persons obtain any :r confirmation by it? No, by no means. Their salvation ıred, whatsoever becomes of the rest of mankind, whether have any hopes or no. Does the goodness and special of God acquire any further honours by this limitation? No nly. Divine grace is perfectly the same towards the elect, ough there were no other person in the world. Are the any way discouraged by it? Not in the least: But many ıs who are awakened to a sense of sin, and are seeking Christ for salvation, by this narrow doctrine may be terribly ıraged from receiving his offers of grace, when they are t to doubt whether there be any grace provided for them, or ıer Jesus be appointed to act as their Saviour, It may be ans to drive some poor souls to despair, when they hear, unless they are elected, they may seek after salvation by t in vain, for there is none purchased for them, not so much ıditionally: And it may tempt them to begin at the wrong and seek to pry into the counsels of God, and enquire after they can never know, that is, their election of God, before are trust in grace, or submit to the gospel of Christ.

ɔw if many inconveniences may arise from this limitation of ıole virtue of the blood of Christ only to the elect, and utterly ling all the rest of mankind; and if no valuable end or tage to religion can be obtained by this narrow opinion, ıhould make men so zealous to get the greatest part of the excluded utterly from all hopes, and from all salvation? w there have been many objections raised against this charit- pinion of the extent of Christ's death in books of contro- ; but the two chief and most plausible are these, which I ıdeavour chiefly to answer, and by these answers lead the ır solving the rest.

Objection I. But may it not be said here, if there be only ward sufficiency of salvation provided for the non-elect, by itional pardon procured through the death of Christ if they l repent and believe, but no inward sufficiency of grace ıed to enlighten their minds, to change their hearts, and : them to exercise this faith and repentance, the event will lliably and necessarily the same, and their damnation as ary and certain, as if there were no outward salvation pro- ; since they of themselves cannot repent, they cannot ; for by the fall all men are become blind in spiritual , and dead in sin.

nswer. It is granted, that no sinner will truly and sincere- ent and believe in Christ, without the powerful and effectu- ıences of converting grace; and therefore they are called

blind and *dead in sin*, because God knows the final event will be the same as if they were under a natural impossibility, or utter natural impotence. And for this reason the conversion of a sinner is called, *a new creation*; *being born again*; *giving sight to the blind*; or, *a resurrection from the dead:* And the necessity of divine power to effect this change, is held forth in many places of scripture. Yet we must say still, that sinners are not under such a real natural impossibility of repenting and believing, as though they were naturally blind or dead. It is true, the blind and the dead have lost their natural powers of seeing and moving; but when scripture represents the inability of sinners to repent, or believe in Christ, by such figures and metaphors as death or blindness, it must be remembered these are but metaphors and figures, such as the holy writers, and all the eastern nations frequently use; and they must not be understood in their literal powers or faculties of understanding, will, and affections, which are the only natural powers necessary to believe and repent.

Now it is plain that these natural faculties, powers, or capacities, are not lost by the fall; for if they were, there would be no manner of need or use of any moral means or motives, such as commands, threatenings, promises, exhortations; these would all be impertinent and absurd, for they could have no more influence on sinners, than if we command or exhort a blind person to see, or a dead body to rise or move; which commands and exhortations would appear ridiculous and useless. And since the blessed God, in his word, uses these moral means and motives to call sinners to repentance and faith, it is certain that they have natural powers and faculties sufficient to understand and practise these duties; and therefore they are not under a necessity of sinning, and of being destroyed, since there is nothing more wanted in a way of sufficient natural powers, faculties, or abilities, than what they have.

All the other impotence and inability therefore to sinners to repent or believe, properly speaking, is but moral, or seated chiefly in their wills. It is a great disinclination or aversion in these natural faculties, to attend to, learn, or practise the things of God and religion*; and this holds them fast in their sinful state in a similar way, as if they were blind and dead, and I said the final event will be the same, that is, they will never repent with-

* I grant this inability to repent has been sometimes called by our divines a natural impotence, because it arises from the original corruption of our nature since the fall of Adam; and in this sense I fully believe it. But this spring of it is much better signified and expressed by the name of native impotence, to shew that it comes from our birth; and the quality of this impotence is best called moral, being seated chiefly in the will and affections, and not in any want of natural powers or faculties to perform what God requires: And the reason is plain, viz. that no new natural powers are given by converting grace, but only a change of the moral bent or inclination of the soul, a happier turn given to our natural faculties by the sovereign grace of God and his Spirit.

almighty grace. And upon this account that strong and led inclination to sin, and aversion to God, which is in the l or affections, is represented in our own language, as well as he eastern countries, by impotence or inability to forsake or dulge sin: As when a drunkard shall say, *I had such a strong ire to the liquor, that I could not but drink to excess, I could withhold the cup from my mouth*: Or *when a murderer shall , I hated my neighbour so much, that having a fair opportu- y, I could not help killing him*: Or when we saying to a man fury in his passion, *you are so warm at present, that you can- see things in a true light, you cannot hearken to reason, you not judge aright, you are not capable of acting regularly.* d that this is the manner of speaking in the eastern countries, evident from the bible; Gen. xxxvii. 4. *Joseph's brethren ted him, and could not speak peaceably to him*: Yet you will nt all this is but moral impotence, that is, a very strong incli- ion to excess of drink, or murder, or passion, or a strong ersion to the contrary virtues. Even in the things of common the *cannot* sometimes signifies nothing but the *will not*; Luke 7. *Trouble me not, my door is shut, my children are with me bed, I cannot rise to give thee*: that is, I will not. And with gard to faith, or believing in Christ, our Saviour explains his n language in this manner. In one place he saith, *No man come unto me except my Father draw him*; John vi. 44. d in another place he charges the Jews with this as their fault: *will not come unto me, that you may have life*; John v. 40. in the parable one excuse is; Luke xiv. 20. *I have married ife, and—I cannot come.* All these citations intend the same ng: Their *cannot* is their *will not*, that is, it is the strength. their aversion to Christ, which is a moral impotence or inabi- to believe in him, and the fault lies in the will.

St. Paul speaks to the same purpose; Rom. viii. 7, 8. where shews, that it is the aversion or *enmity of the carnal mind to d*, which hinders it from obeying the law of God, and at last says, *it cannot be subject to it. The carnal mind is enmity ainst God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither leed can be: So then they who are in the flesh cannot please d.* The fault still lies in the will of sinful man; and it is this kes it criminal, while it is naturally impossible to be avoided overcome. And upon this account God is pleased to use moral ans and motives, viz. promises, threatenings, commands, &c. vard all men, such as are suited to awaken their hearts, and cite and persuade their will to use all their natural abilities, to their natural powers or faculties to work, to attend to, and rn, and practise faith and repentance; and it is by these very ans God persuades his elect powerfully to repent and believe. it when persons will not hear, nor be influenced by these mo-

tives, because of their strong and wilful aversion to God and godliness, their crime is entirely their own, and their condemnation is just. They have natural powers or faculties in them which, if well tried, might overcome their native propensity to vice, though they never will do it.

If the great God, in a way of sovereign mercy, gives some persons superior aids of grace to overcome this moral impotence, and conquer this aversion to God and goodness*; if he effectually leads, inclines, or persuades them by his Spirit to repent and believe in Christ, this does not at all hinder the others from exercising their natural powers of understanding and will, in believing and repenting. Nor can any thing of their guilt and wilful impenitence be imputed to the blessed God, who is Lord of his own favours, and gives or withholds where he pleases, and *who shall say to him, what dost thou?* Why should *my eye be evil* toward my neighbour, because *the eye of God is good?* Or what pretence have I to charge God with injustice, when he does more for me than he is bound to do, though he does more for my neighbour than he has done for me?

Let this then be constantly maintained, there is a natural, inward sufficiency of powers and faculties given to every sinner to hearken to the calls and offers of grace and the gospel, though they lie under a moral impotence; and there is an outward sufficiency of provision of pardon in the death of Christ, for every one who repents and accepts the gospel, though pardon is not actually procured for all men, nor secured to them. And thus much is sufficient to maintain the sincerity of God in his universal offers of grace through Jesus Christ, and his present commands to all men to repent and trust in his mercy; as well as to vindicate his equity in the last great day, when the impenitent and unbelievers shall be condemned. Their death lies at their own door, for since there was both an outward and inward sufficiency for their recovery, the fault must lie in their own free-will, in their wilful aversion to God and Christ, and his salvation. I think this distinction of natural and moral power and impotence, will reconcile all the various expressions of scripture on this subject, both to one another, as well as to the reason of things, which can hardly be reconciled any other way.

Objection II. Suppose the non-elect are not debarred from this salvation, by the want of natural powers sufficient to receive

* Whether the Spirit of God effectually persuade the will to repent and believe in Christ, by immediate influence upon the will itself, or by setting the things of the gospel before the mind in so strong a light, and persuading the soul so to attend to them, as shall effectually influence the will, this shall not be any matter of my present debate or determination; for in both these the event and consequences are much the same. There is no new natural power or faculty given to the soul in order to faith and repentance, but a divine influence upon the old natural powers, giving them a new and better turn.

and accept it, yet since the great God foresees this their aversion to repentance and holiness, and foreknows they will never accept the salvation of Christ, and that as certainly as if they had already renounced it; does not this future certainty of the event lay an effectual bar against their believing and accepting it? For if they should repent and accept, it would contradict the foreknowledge of God. We enquire also further, can his offers of grace be sincere to persons whom he foresees will certainly reject it? What are these offers, but delusions of their hope, and appointed aggravations to increase their guilt; since God certainly knows these offers of grace will be abused only to sinful purposes?

Answer I. As for the first part of this enquiry, if we will give ourselves leave to think impartially upon the case, we must agree, that the mere knowledge of any event, without any real influence from the power that knows, does not make the event necessary, whether it be foreknown or after-known. If I foreknow the sun will rise to-morrow, that has no more influence on the sun's rising than my after-knowledge that it rose yesterday. Now the great God, among his unsearchable powers and perfections, has a knowledge of the agency of free causes, as we have of necessary causes: And as he has a full view of all concomitant circumstances, he hath a way to foresee events in their contingent causes, such as the free-will of man is, as well as we have a way by reason to foresee many things in their necessary causes. It is certain he does foreknow the future contingent actions of men, even their wicked actions, because he has foretold a multitude of them in the bible; and it is granted, that from his foreknowledge of any future event, we may infer the consequential certainty of it, because his foreknowledge cannot be deceived; yet this does not at all prove his antecedent determination of it by any decree, nor his influence upon it: Neither can we infer from God's mere foreknowledge, that there is any natural necessity of the event, since the causes are but contingent, such as man's free-will. The distinction between the certainty of a future event, with the consequent necessity of it, derived from God's foreknowledge, and the antecedent necessity of it, derived from the nature of things, or from God's actual pre-determination of it, sufficiently solves this difficulty. The first may be where the second is not.

II. We have reason to believe, that the gospel is never sent, nor the proposals of salvation made to any people, city, or nation, where God foresees there are none at all that will accept of it. Now in the way of God's government of this world, he deals with mankind as a number of free and moral agents, and publishes and offers sincerely his benefits to men in general, promiscuously to the elect and the non-elect: And while by these same proposals, means, and motives, he effectually and

powerfully *gathers his elect out of the world*, he gives sufficient encouragement to all sinners to accept the same grace. God's secret fore-knowledge of those who will not accept it, is by no means a sufficient reason to prevent or forbid the general offers of his grace to them, because the design of his government is to treat mankind as reasonable and moral agents.

III. There may be valuable and unknown ends and purposes in the government of God, attained by his sincere forbidding sin to creatures, whom he knows resolved to practise it; and by his sincere commands of duty to creatures whom he knows resolved to neglect it; and that without any real injury or injustice done to the sinner. The wisdom, holiness and dignity of his government must be maintained in all the just appearances of it, though sinners will rebel against it; for the honour of divine government in the authority, wisdom and holiness of it, is of much more importance than the welfare of ten thousand of his creatures. *Let God be true*, saith the scripture, *though every man be a liar*; Rom. iii. 4. Let God appear sincere and wise, glorious and holy, though every man should turn rebel. God may wisely and sincerely publish the doctrines of salvation with sufficient light and evidence about them, to those who he knows will not believe them: He may wisely and sincerely offer grace and salvation to those who he foresees will refuse it. Would it be an act of folly, or of injustice, or of untruth or insincerity, in a wise and good man, to give forth his commands to ten children, though by all present appearances, his great wisdom and sagacity foresees that seven of them will disobey him, and only three comply? Should he not approve himself to the world in doing what is wise and good, and in maintaining his parental character with honour, though some of his sons neglect their filial duty? Hereby also he gives his three obedient children an opportunity to shew their duty and love, though the other seven will take occasion thence to discover their rebellion. The great God, in his government of the world, conducts his unsearchable affairs by such general laws and rules, as is most for his honour; and neither his holiness nor goodness make it necessary for him to change this his wise conduct, though he foresees many of his creatures will grow worse instead of better by it.

IV. Whether or no we can guess at any of the reasons of God's government or conduct in this thing, yet the matter of fact is certain, and beyond all dispute. God has acted in this manner, and does act thus in many instances: He sent his gospel to the Jews by his son Jesus, though he foreknew, and even foretold by his prophets, that the Jews would reject the gospel, and murder the divine messenger. He gave his word of warning, his call to repentance and righteousness, to be preached by Noah

a wicked world, for *one hundred and twenty years*, though he eknew that very few would be reformed by Noah's preaching; d he told Noah, that at the end of those years he would bring lood over the world to destroy the wicked inhabitants of it, o would not be reformed. Again, when he put Adam and e into paradise under the law of innocency, and forbid them to t of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, we also believe he eknew that Adam and Eve would eat this fruit, and disobey eir Creator; and yet he wisely forbid them to eat it. Now ce we know that a just God hath in fact done these things, must confess there cannot be the least injustice in them. ay, we may go a step farther in these matters of fact. God has tually sent his Son and his gospel with miracles and divine evince, where he knew they would not be received, or at most by very few, that is, to Chorazin, Capernaum, and Bethsaida in alilee; and yet he never sent this gospel, with such evidence, to yre and Sidon, to Sodom and Gomorrah, where Christ tells , it would have been received, and the inhabitants *would have pented in sackcloth and ashes;* Mat. xi. 21. we are sure there is thing unjust in all this transaction, because we know God has me it, *who is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his orks*; Psal. cxlv. 17. Let us then content ourselves with owing the things that make for our own peace, and humbly bmit to the wise and gracious government of God, for our own ernal happiness, though we cannot enter into the impenetrable crets of his counsel, nor solve all difficulties therein, because r short and narrow view of things cannot comprehend them: nd yet, at the same time, if we can, by our reasonings accordg to scripture, cast any happy gleam of light into these darkesses of providence, whereby any honour may be done to God, y imputation of injustice taken off from his conduct, any scrues of mankind satisfied, and any angry contentions removed; is neither unlawful nor improper to attempt and seek after such lvantages: And with this view and hope I would propose the ree following questions:

UEST. XIV.—*Can the different Opinions of Christians, concerning the Operations of divine Grace on the Souls of Men, be reconciled?*

The corruption and degeneracy of mankind, by the fall of lam, is generally and truly supposed by our protestant divines, be so great and universal, and their weakness or impotence to ange their own sinful natures into holiness, is so evident, both the discourses of the sacred writers, and in the experience of en, that it is agreed among most or all of them, there is a ne-

cessity of some aids of divine grace towards our recovery; and that not only to provide, by proper outward means, such a salvation as may be answerable to the miseries we labour under, and to propose it outwardly and plainly in the gospel, but the best of us stand in need, in our fallen state, also of some further favour from heaven, some inward assistances and influences of the grace of God, and his Spirit, in order to restore us from the ruins of our fall by repentance, and to enable us to accept of the salvation which is procured by our Lord Jesus Christ, the Mediator.

There have been some writers indeed, who profess christianity, who suppose nothing else is necessary, in order to the recovery of fallen man, where the gospel is preached, but the mere outward proposal of this gospel, and the representation of the readiness of God to pardon the sins of those that repent and believe, together with all the motives of hope and fear, &c. which are made use of in the bible, to awaken and excite sinners to return unto God. They imagine that the providential disposal of the outward circumstances of men, by their enjoying the benefit of a pious education, or their sitting under a useful ministry, or the advantage of having good company frequently to converse with, and religious books brought in their way, with opportunity and leisure for reading, &c. are abundantly sufficient *to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God*; Acts xxvi. 18. *to renew them unto holiness, and to make new creatures of them*, fit for the business and blessedness of heaven. Now these kind providences are what they call *the grace of God*, and the only grace they will allow to be necessary to our salvation. This was the most common sentiment of the ancient pelagians*, who gave so much trouble to the churches

* It is pity the professed disciples and followers of the religion of Christ should have been divided into so many different opinions, and thereby given occasions to distinguish them by so many different names, which are chiefly derived either from their several tenets, or some practice of their forefathers, or from some signal writers who espoused, defended or propagated those different sentiments. I could wish with all my soul that they were all of one opinion, and all confined only to the single name of christians, which was given them first at Antioch, to distinguish them from heathens, Jews and infidels of every kind. But since there are such multitudes of different sentiments among them, and in writing controversies one cannot conveniently use a long paraphrasis to describe each of them, sufficient to distinguish them from the rest, we are constrained to make use of those names by which they have either distinguished themselves, or the world hath distinguished them, such as pelagians, strict calvinists, arminians or remonstrants, and moderate calvinists or reconcilers.

But here let it be observed, that the most rigid calvinists, who pretend to carry the doctrines of divine grace to the greatest height of resistless and sovereign efficiency, and the pelagians, who generally reduce it to the lowest degree, that is, to mere favourable outward providences, are counted the two extremes in this controversy about divine grace: And between these two there are almost as many degrees and classes of different sentiments, as there are writers. Some of them approach a little nearer to the one side, and some to the other. And it

of Christ in early times, and which occasioned the labours of St. Augustine to be much employed in the refutation of their errors: Afterward they allowed some illumination of the understanding by divine grace.

But I fear those who embrace the old pelagian doctrines, have too little regard to the express language of scripture, and to its most obvious sense, when it speaks so much about the power or grace of God, and the operations of the Spirit of God, in giving us *a new heart, creating a clean heart in us, enlightening our minds*, converting our souls, or turning us to God, and *creating us anew after the image of God, working in us both to will and to do*, &c. whereby some inward and effectual operations of divine grace, upon the minds or hearts of men, are so plainly expressed, that even the remonstrants or arminians themselves, I think in all their ranks and classes have supposed some such inward workings of the grace of God upon the heart; because so many plain texts of scripture could never be otherwise interpreted, without an unreasonable force put upon them. Yet I think it must be acknowledged, that these last named writers do expressly allow these inward operations of God, to go no farther than to render men salvable, and to leave the powers of men in a state of indifference, to convert and turn themselves to God, but not effectually to determine and secure their salvation; of which I shall speak more immediately. Among those who admit of divine grace to operate inwardly on the minds and hearts of men, there have been several different opinions what this grace is, how far it reaches, and how much of it is necessary towards the recovery of man. But before I represent these several opinions, I would lay down some general propositions, which I think may be assented to by most or all of them, and exhibit them as a medium of reconciliation to one another: And I shall rejoice, if I may be so far favoured of providence, as to convince them how their several different sentiments may all be tolerably reconciled to these general propositions, and thereby take away a great deal of that noisy controversy which has unhappily perplexed the church of Christ upon this subject.

Proposition I. God has provided a glorious salvation for fallen men by Jesus Christ, which is sufficient for all men in its own nature, and shall be certainly effectual to all that are willing to accept of it upon his appointed terms, or in his own appointed way, that is, in a way of repentance for sin, renewal unto holiness, and faith or dependence on the mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

is not fit that any persons should be comprehended under any of these names, but which they themselves allow or chuse, according as they come nearest to the opinions of this or the other party.

II. Since God has made so glorious a provision for the recovery of mankind, he will not leave it to mere chance and uncertainty, whether any person shall repent and accept of this offered salvation or no; lest, through the universal depravation and wretched obstinacy of men, his own gracious counsels for our salvation should be frustrated, and the important labours and sufferings of his Son be sustained to no saving purpose, and rendered almost useless to the world.

III. There is no way, which I can conceive of, how God should secure or ascertain the salvation of any in general, or make it sure even to his own foreknowledge, unless it be some way or other ascertained, which particular persons shall accept of this grace and salvation. Observe, I do not here go so far as to say, the salvation of those particular persons should be made necessary by any such absolute decree, or such irresistible influences as some have asserted; but it must some way or other be made certain to the foreknowledge of God, that such particular persons shall be saved; for if it be left at utter uncertainty as to every individual, how can it possibly be known that any individuals at all shall be finally partakers of it?

IV. God will magnify his grace in the salvation of all those who are saved in such a manner, that every one shall acknowledge his own salvation perfectly owing to the divine mercy; and that none shall have any cause or occasion *to glory in himself*, but shall confess to the glory of divine grace, that it is grace that is the supreme and the chief cause that has made him *to differ from others*. Without this there could not be a holy harmony and concert among all the saved number, in their songs of praise to God and their Savour: *Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but to thy grace be all the glory:* Nor indeed could any tolerable interpretation be given to many scriptures, which humble the pride of man, by ascribing all to God.

V. How much soever the blessed God may design to manifest and magnify his free and sovereign grace towards sinful men, yet in every step of his procedure he will maintain such an invariable regard to his equity, as Governor of the world, that he will never exercise his grace in such a manner as to take away the necessary regards and honours due to his governing justice. The great God has given man an understanding mind to distinguish between good and evil, and a freedom of will to chuse one or the other, and ordained him to be always, and in all circumstances, a proper subject of his moral government. And he has determined and resolved in righteousness to manifest himself at last as a Judge, and *render to every one according to their works;* Rom. ii. 6. And therefore he will maintain this righteous design of his government, to make the eternal rewards and

onnishments of men to depend on what they themselves have reely chosen, whether it be good or evil: Nor will he ever lo any thing inconsistent with this his glorious and universal lesign, as a righteous Governor and Judge of his intelligent reatures.

VI. Therefore when divine grace operates upon the minds r wills of men, in order to their conversion and salvation, it is enerally done in such a soft, gentle and connatural manner, at does not put any violence upon the faculties of the soul: ut for the most part, the grace of God, and his Holy Spirit, em to operate insensibly, as though our own faculties wrought is of themselves, and without any strong, certain, and evident otice, that it is the operation of any spirit superior to our own: nd yet by the blessed effects of our conversion and sanctification, ompared with the records of scripture, we certainly infer it ust be by virtue of some divine influence received from above, at the glory may be given unto God and his grace, as the sureme cause of our salvation. Now if all the particular opinions parties, about the methods and degrees of the exercise of this ward grace towards the salvation of men, may be pretty well conciled to these propositions, I do not see any sufficient occaon for such very noisy and angry contests as have been found the christian church upon this subject; since they agree in ese most necessary and important things which relate to the onour of divine justice, and divine grace, as they are reprented in scripture, though perhaps there may remain some parcular texts and expressions of scripture, to which it may be hard reconcile the contenders on either side. However, since I ink these propositions contain the most important sense and degn of the revelations of scripture on this subject, and I am peraded they may be solidly maintained and defended by scripture, d reason, and experience, I hope we shall be able to shew, at all the different schemes are consistent, in some measure, ith these propositions.

Let us now recount the three chief sentiments of men under e several letters of the alphabet, A, C, and R, for the sake of etter distinction.

C imagines mankind to be so entirely and universally corpted by the fall, and impotent to all that is good, the mind to e so blind, the will so perverse, and the affections set upon carl objects with such obstinacy, that there must be an immediate peration of God, by his grace, in a physical or supernatural anner, on all the several powers of our nature, to rectify them, d make them capable, willing and fit to be partakers of this lvation. He supposes there must be special, efficacious, and resistible influences of the Holy Spirit on the mind or underanding to enlighten it, to see and discern divine things in their

God has no farther hand than this, viz. first, that he forms the nature and temper of every man, with all his intellectual and animal powers, a knowing mind and free-will; that then he, by his providence, brings them to the hearing and knowledge of their own miserable state by nature, and the way of salvation, by hearing or reading of the gospel of Christ; that he secretly and gently, by particular occurrences of life, and by the insensible motions of his own Spirit, sets before men the things of God, and Christ, and eternity, with all motives proper to affect and persuade them; that he strikes some supernatural light into their understandings, and he allows some suasive or moral influences or touches of the grace of God, upon the will of men, so far as may relieve them against the too powerful opposition of corrupt nature, and render repentance and conversion easier, and more practicable: And he maintains also, that without these assistances, fallen man would not repent and be converted; and it is found among his expressions, *that grace is absolutely necessary to our having sufficient power to do good, and to perform every act of piety**.

But after all this grace, A leaves men in a state of indeterminate doubt and indifference, whether they shall be finally persuaded to repentance or no: And this is the point of controversy between the disputants on this subject. This A maintains, that grace leaves the heart of man still in a sort of equilibrium, or wavering balance and uncertainty, to determine entirely for itself, whether it will receive the gospel or not, except, perhaps, in some very extraordinary case, as Paul, and some of the apostles, &c. who seem to be converted at once. And in short this is the chief centre or hinge whereon the debate between A and C turns.

And yet A supposes still his doctrine is very consistent with all the six propositions, and particularly with the fourth, which ascribes the conversion and salvation of men so entirely to divine grace, as the supreme cause: "For saith he, all the scriptures which ascribe our repentance and conversion to grace, are always supposed to speak in a consistence with God's moral government over free creatures, which many other texts assert and maintain: And therefore those expressions of grace must be interpreted with some limitation." A thinks fit to add also, that he gives a fair exposition of the scriptures, which ascribe our salvation to the operations of grace, because grace has the chief hand therein; and without these various and necessary opera-

* See the remonstrances made by those who opposed the synod of Dort, whereby they plainly distinguish their opinions from the pelagians, and use this language which I have here represented. I wish all those christians in our age and nation, who profess to follow the opinions of the remonstrants, did but come so near to the doctrines of scripture, as the phrases and expressions of these men import.'

ons of grace, sinful man never would be converted and saved. ome of the professed partisans of A have thus expressed iemselves*.

The first way of reconciliation.—R, who cannot entirely pprove of the opinion of C, for the reasons which A has iven, yet is as much displeased with A's opinion, notwithanding all the excuses he has made; because he fears, it eems, to contradict many of those express scriptures which ascribe he conversion, sanctification, and salvation of men, so powerilly, and plainly, and certainly, to God, and his Spirit, and his race: And therefore he chuses another sentiment, which he hinks may reconcile all these difficulties; for he supposes his pinion to be more obviously and evidently consistent with the ix propositions before laid down, and to be much more agreeable to all the expressions of scripture, which are urged both on he side of A and C: And on this account it is more happily nited, saith he, to ascribe to free grace its full glory, as well as naintain the honours of God's moral government.

R's opinion therefore is this: He supposes that the fall of nan has so perverted his natural powers, that inward effectual race is necessary to save him; but that the will of man, both in is first and general turn from sin to repentance and holiness, as vell as in all future acts of obedience, maintains its own liberty, s a power free to act, or not to act: And that it shall never be hus sovereignly, entirely, and irresistibly moved by God, the ill-wise Governor of mankind, as C imagines. But that, hough there are some powerful divine influences, both toward he mind and the will, without which the man would never epent and be saved, yet the will is still a free faculty, and is such, is the only proper subject of moral government; and herefore its freedom *to chuse good or evil*, must be always inally left to its own determination, without which there would e no vice or virtue, nothing proper for reward or punishment, nor for any moral subjection to a wise and righteous Creator and Governor.

But since R believes the doctrine of particular persons elected to salvation, he goes a middle way to secure the salvation of Christ to the particular persons designed, viz. R supposes, that divine grace strikes such a new and perspicuous light into the

* In representing the calvinist and the arminian schemes here, I am not sensible that I have ascribed any one opinion to either of them, but what I am supported in by John Calvin and Francis Turretine on one side, and by Philip Limborch and the remonstrants at the synod of Dort on the other side. I grant it has been too often the practice of controversial writers on the calvinistic side, to represent the arminians in the pelagian form; and the writers of the arminian party have again represented all the calvinists in the form of supralapsarians and antinomians: But this is the way to widen the divisions of the christian world, and inflame the spirits of men against their brethren, and not to reconcile them, which R has *here attempted to do.*

mind or understanding by supernatural influence, and sets tl great things of the gospel and eternity in such a powerful an bright view before the soul, as fully convinces the judgment, an such as God knows will effectually and certainly persuade th will, and all the following powers, to comply with the proposal of grace, both in the first actual turn of the heart or conversion as well as in all future good actions: And as he knows it wi have this certain effect, so he designs it shall.

"Thus, says he, the will of man is left to enjoy its own na tural freedom, and to chuse or refuse piety and happiness. Goc by a knowledge and foresight of all the natures and tempers c men, and all the events of things, and by concurring thus o by the operations of his Spirit of grace, he does that by hi grace, which he is certain will issue in the accomplishment of hi own gracious designs; and yet he does not make it necessar by any absolute physical influence. He chuses some men to re pentance and salvation from the beginning, he forms their natu ral powers, and he disposes of their providential circumstances i life, so as he foreknows will answer his gracious and eternal pur poses; he enlightens their understandings so powerfully by hi grace and Spirit, that he, who knows their frame, is certain wi finally persuade their wills to comply with the proposals and de mands of his gospel. And thus his electing grace obtains its ori ginal design, without constraining the will of man, or entrenchin upon the honour of God's moral government.

And to speak yet further in a philosophical sense, "R sup poses the will of man to be so free and undeterminable by hi other powers, that he does not suppose it to be naturally and ne cessarily moved in this compliance, even by the light of the mind but that it feels itself persuaded and overcome in a moral wa by the powerful motives and arguments which are set before tl mind, and freely determines itself, and makes choice of tl grace of God and salvation*.

And he adds further, "that all these scriptures before-me tioned, which C has alledged, may be sufficiently and happi explained to maintain our own original sinfulness and impoten to all that is good, and to secure the necessity of divine grac since he acknowledges that without this divine sovereign infl ence or illumination of the mind, the will of man would nev be changed; and that God bestows this light or powerful ill mination on the soul, on purpose to produce this divine chan on the will; and he foreknows certainly, and designs that it sha produce it, though he does not make it necessary and irresistibl The great God may properly be said to *convert the soul, change the heart or the will, to regenerate the man, to create*

* See this matter explained more at large, in section v, of an "Essay the Freedom of Will both in God and Man."

new nature within, and to save a sinner, when he strikes such a supernatural light into the mind, as he certainly knows and intends shall finally prevail over the will by moral influence or persuasion, though not by physical necessity, or any overpowering force, and absolute determination*. "Thus, says he, divine grace has its complete honour, for it is the first and supreme mover in conversion, and without it no man would repent or turn to God; and hereby also, God has all the honours of his own government, in a moral way, over creatures that are endued with freedom of will to chuse or refuse their own happiness."

If I were to give my sentiments in the matter, I must confess I should like the opinion of R best, in as much as it happily secures and confirms the salvation of such particular persons as God has chosen, without making machines of them; for though R allows the grace of God to enlighten the mind, so far as shall certainly gain a victory over the will, and persuade it to repent, believe, and obey God, yet he supposes the will is left still in its native freedom, which cannot be constrained, or absolutely and necessarily determined in its acts or volitions, even by any ideas or perceptions of the mind, and he allows them only the moral force of motives to persuade the will: Thus the full honour of divine government, in all the moral views of it, is sufficiently maintained, as well as the proper freedom or liberty of the will of man; and God bestows salvation finally on those only who are persuaded to repent and accept of it. And herein lies the glory of God's moral government, that distributes rewards or punishments, according as men chuse or refuse good or evil.

But I think there might be a little improvement made to the sentiments of R thus: Is there not a great distinction to be made between the habit, or the principle of holiness in the heart, and the acts or exercises of it in the life? It is certain, there are, or may be, infused habits or principles, as well as acquired ones: As for instance; the apostles had a habit of talking Hebrew or syro-chaldaic as their native language, which was acquired by learning from their childhood; but they had an infused habit or principle of speaking other strange languages; given them by the supernatural power of God or his Spirit, at the day of pentecost which they exercised immediately with great freedom, as related in Acts ii. 4—11.

* Whereas some call this grace *irresistible*, and some prefer the word *insuperable*; R rather chuses to call it *effectual*, which is a scriptural term; and *victorious*, which is favoured by Mat. xii. 21. *Christ shall bring forth judgment unto victory*: which is interpreted, that he shall bring forth the knowledge of his gospel unto victory over the nations: Or it may be explained, he shall bring forth the judgment of the mind finally to a victory over the will and affections, which is a very near allusion, if not the true interpretation of the place.

Now since there may be habits or principles of faith, repentance and holiness, infused or inwrought immediately by divine power and grace, prior to all acts or exercises thereof; why may we not suppose, that beside the principles of light infused into the mind, whereby the judgment is convinced, there is an infused principle of holiness also formed or inwrought in the soul, in a physical or supernatural manner, by the Spirit or grace of God, which may excite and influence the will toward its acts or volitions, but not constrain it? I mean, why may not the divine power, which formed the soul, give it a propensity or habitual inclination to what is good, like that which Adam had the first moment of his creation, though in a lower degree? This is part of *the image of God* which he had at first, and which is now *to be renewed* in man: And as this principle was an infused habit in Adam, why may it not be so in every true convert now? And further as this did not *necessitate* the acts of the will to obedience, even in the day of innocence, so neither doth it now; but only gives it *a disposition* toward actual repentance and obedience, faith and holiness, at proper occasions: And I think this may very well be called *new creation, regeneration*, or *resurrection from the dead*, in the scriptural sense. I do not see that this concession destroys the moral government of God over man now, any more than it did over Adam in his innocence, and especially since all moral government hath its special regard to the actions wrought by the soul, rather than to the habits or principles which are in it; principles and habits neither are nor can be directly under the command of the will, as all actual volitions or actions are, which are therefore most properly subject to moral regulations. I think all the rest of R's sentiments may stand just as he proposed them.

I acknowledge, that there are several texts of scripture, which, in their literal sense, seem to speak the language of C, wherein the ruin of our nature, and its impotence to all that is good, is set forth in its strongest light, by the metaphors of *blindness, and death in trespasses and sins*: And the sovereignty of divine grace is described in its brightest, and most sovereign and insuperable influences. But still I cannot help querying, as both A and R do, whether this literal sense of those words, this absolute and necessary determination both of the mind and will, and all the powers of man in its first conversion, and in all future good actions, does not detract too much from God's moral government of the world? And whether all these metaphors and emblems, and bright representations of scripture, may not be sufficiently interpreted in plain language, and their proper sense, according to the explication of the grace of God, and its efficacious influences, which R has made; especially if we take in the almighty infusion of a supernatural habit of holiness; always

ɜmbering that R allows the divine influences on the mind to) great, as he knows will certainly persuade the will to re- and accept of grace, and designs that it shall have this t, though not in a way of resistless force and necessity. why may not this sufficiently answer those scriptures which t God's *working in us both to will and to do of his good ure?* Phil. ii. 13.

On the other hand, I question whether the opinions of A ever been easily and plainly reconciled with such a multi- of scriptures, which the followers of C produce in the nce of their opinions concerning divine grace. However it I think the sentiments both of A, C, and R, may, in some able measure, be reconciled to all the six propostions I laid n at first: at least they all declare they design them to be so; gh perhaps some of them are more easily and happily suited me of these propositions, and others do best consist with the of them. Thus much for the first part of this discourse.

The second way of reconciliation.—A further principle of nciliation between A, C, and R, is now in my thoughts, it is this: Let us enquire whether the sentiments of A, as as of R and C, do not imply and suppose the certain desig- n of certain persons to a final salvation; and consequently her A has any reason to cast any reproaches upon the doc- of particular election and special grace, since his own sen- nts will lead very nearly to the same doctrine. This will ar by the following steps of enquiry:

1. Doth not A suppose, that the providential transactions of e power and grace, in the formation of the natural powers ery man, and the disposal of the circumstances of any man's under pious parents, or an useful ministry, or occasional ersation, &c. were designed by the great God, as helps and ums towards the repentance and salvation of those that are d?

2. Does not A allow of such operations of grace, by illumi- n and suasion of the mind and will, as the great God sees not only sufficient, but necessary under the present dreadful neracy of man, toward the conversion and salvation of those are saved, even though they proceed no farther than to leave will of man in a state of balancing indifference, to accept or se the offered grace?

3. Does not A likewise admit these operations of grace to be ted with a friendly design towards these men, to facilitate faith and repentance, and make the way plainer and easier rds their salvation? And does he not grant that God is best sed, when such a person repents and accepts of his gospel rding to his kind designs?

4. Does he *not also believe*, that the blessed God foresees

and foreknows that these men, by the free use of their natural powers, thus far assisted by divine grace, will be finally and effectually persuaded *to believe, and repent*, and be saved?

5. Has not the blessed God, who *knows all his own works from the beginning*, designed from eternity to bestow all these advantages on those particular persons, and to carry them on so far, that he foresees their repentance and salvation will be the certain consequences of this his grace, though not the necessary effects of it?

6. I would ask, whether if the blessed God gives so much outward and inward grace to certain men, as he foresees and knows will be certainly improved by them to their salvation, and without which they could not repent and be saved, may it not be properly said, that God designs the salvation of these particular persons that he elects or chuses them unto eternal life*, that he converts and brings them to repentance by his grace, and that he stands justly entitled to their everlasting praises, as the supreme and certain author of their faith and repentance, and salvation?

In the last place then, may I not enquire whether or no it be not consistent with A's own opinions in the main, to allow those expressions of scripture their proper force and meaning, which speak of God's *election of men to salvation, of his chusing them in Christ Jesus, of his giving them to Christ, of his bestowing faith and repentance upon them, preserving or keeping them by his power unto salvation*, and conducting them safely onward to happiness? And whether it will not be much more natural and easy, to interpret such scriptures concerning the election, conversion and salvation of particular persons, than to put a strain and force upon some of them, and to interpret them only concerning his giving the outward means of grace to a nation or a people, or chusing the heathen nations in general to be acquainted with his salvation, without the application of it to any particular person whatsoever?

I would fain enquire, whether or no, if serious christians are but desirous and inclined to come as near to each other as they can, in their sentiments of divine things, if they are but willing to be reconciled to one another, as far as the present darknesses and difficulties will allow of; I say, whether they may not embrace one another heartily, and unite so far in their sentiments as I have represented? This will take away a thousand cavils and contentions, and a thousand unchristian reproaches, from the lips and pens of those who worship the same God, believe in the same Saviour, hope for the operations of the same blessed Spirit, and desire to ascribe their salvation to the same grace of *God, who is blessed for evermore?* Amen.

* May not the words of St. Paul; Rom. viii. 29. be perfectly applied to this scheme, *whom he foreknew he also did predestinate*, &c.

Quest. XV.—*What is the State and Condition of the Heathens, who have never heard of the Gospel, or have utterly forgot and lost all Notices of it?*

It is not to be doubted that the gospel has been twice preached to all mankind: first by Adam to his family, which came from the mouth of God, who promised *the seed of the woman* to become a Saviour; and then by *Noah, who was a preacher of righteousness*, and doubtless of grace also, to his three sons Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Now Adam and Noah were the fathers of all mankind, before and since the flood: And in the early ages it is evident, that the knowledge of the true God and religion, in some degrees of it, did continue in several families of Noah's sons for a considerable time; such as the families of Melchizedek king of Salem, Abimelech king of Gerar, Job in the land of Uz, and his four friends, and many others. And whosoever in following ages retained so much knowledge of God and his promised mercy, as to engage them in repentance of all their sins, in faith or dependence on divine grace, and in new obedience to the will of God, might obtain salvation. How many or how few these were, and what favourable allowances God might make, and other enquiries relating to this subject, may be found more largely discoursed of in a treatise entitled, *a Caveat against Infidelity*, and in a book called, *The Strength and Weakness of Human Reason*, both published a few years ago. Nor do I know how to explain and determine the questions relating to this subject, in a more conspicuous manner, than those two writings have done it; so that I chuse to ask the favour of my readers to seek their satisfaction in those discourses.

However, concerning the heathens, I may venture to deliver one plain and certain truth, because it is manifestly founded upon scripture; and that is, since the corruption of nature through all mankind is so great and deplorable, since the hope of recovery, by the covenant of grace, hath only those faint and feeble discoveries of it made to the heathens, which the general *goodness and long-suffering of God* might afford them, and since they have no outward call from the word to repentance and hope, it is evident that the righteous God will inflict but small punishment upon such heathen sinners, in comparison of those who shall fall under the express sentence of damnation, for having neglected or resisted the grace of the gospel, which has been published to them by Jesus Christ or the apostles, or by any discoveries of the things of the New Testament, in the nations or ages where they have lived. And thus our Lord himself declares, when he denounces his heavy woes against *Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum*; and asserts, that the punishments of *Tyre and Sidon, Sodom and Gomorrah*, shall be tolerable in

comparison of those who shall be found sinners against the clear and express publication of the gospel, at the great judgment day; Mat. xi. 20—24.

The testimony of St. Paul; Acts xvii. 30. seems also to support the same opinion, where he tells us, *that God winked at those times, at this ignorance,* wherein the heathen and idolatrous nations lived before the manifestation of the gospel. The word ὑπεριδὼν doth not mean that he let them go without punishment, for, Rom. ii. 9, 12. *Tribulation and anguish will fall upon every soul that doth evil, whether Jew or Gentile. Those who have sinned without law, shall perish without law:* But God took but little notice of them with an eye of punishing justice, in comparison of those who shall hear of those solemn calls to repentance which are now given to men by the gospel of Christ, and the preaching of the judgment of the world by him. Thus every sinner's punishment in the other world, shall stand in an exact proportion to the aggravation of the sins they have committed, considered together with the different degrees of light and knowledge they have received. Divine justice will measure out to every one their righteous proportions, with perfect exactess.

QUEST. XVI.—*What will be the State and Condition of that large Part of Mankind who die in Infancy, under any of the Dispensations of the Covenant of Grace?*

Answer. It is a very large part of mankind, indeed, that dies in the infant state, before they arrive at any capacity to know God or their duty, virtue or vice, and therefore they cannot be charged with actual sin, or rewarded for actual obedience. If we may judge by the yearly bills of mortality*, we find more than a third part of the race of man dying before they arrive at two years old, and about half before five: A dreadful devastation of nature! A wide spectacle of ruin, diffused over all nations and ages, by the sin of their common father!

It is true, we cannot tell at what age of life, or at what degrees of growing reason, the great God will appoint children to stand upon their own foot, and will deal with them as rational

* Perhaps it will be said, that the bills of mortality in or near London, are no sufficient rule to judge of the deaths of mankind in general, because multitudes of young creatures die there for want of air and conveniences of life. But let it be remembered also, that in the savage nations of Asia, Africa and America, there are more of those young creatures die for want of due care, and for want also of the methods of human skill to relieve the diseases of children, and by this means some of the savage countries are almost depopulated, and the nations destroyed, as travellers inform us. So that take all mankind together, and I am ready to think the bills of mortality, in and near London, may pretty nearly yield us a just calculation as to this matter.

atures, as intelligent and free agents, according to their own rsonal actions and behaviour. Some perhaps shall sooner be judged capable and sufficient to act for themselves, and shall dealt with according to their own moral conduct, and some ich later; and both according to their degrees of capacity *to ow, to chuse, and to refuse good or evil.* But this season is own only to God himself, and *the Judge of all the earth will right;* Gen. xviii. 25.

In the mean time, while they are deemed infants, and have personal sin or obedience of their own, but only lie under the ntence of death for the sin of Adam, so far as it is imputed to em, let us not send any of their little souls into a separate ate of torment, as soon as death has seized their bodies, with-it an express divine warrant: Nor let us raise up their bodies ain from the dead, and then doom them, soul and body, to tense anguish and everlasting fire and sorrow, merely for dam's sin, unless we can find some very evident sentence of is kind passed upon them in the word of God. The equity d the compassion of a God, so far as we can judge of it by e light of reason, would not inflict so severe and eternal a nishment on these little creatures, who are personally innocent free from actual sin: And unless we can find some divine velation that pronounces it with great strength and evidence, t us not so far contradict the gentler dictates of nature and ason, as to assert this opinion for truth, nor impose it on our wn belief, nor on the belief of others. Let us try then, whe-er we cannot find out some milder punishment for their share the guilt of Adam, in the bible. May we not humbly sup-se, that a most wise, most righteous, and most merciful God, ill deal with them according to the following principles, de-ved partly from the scriptures, and partly from the reason of ings?

Principle I. As the children of men had all been born inno-nt and happy, and had worn out their infant state in innocence d happiness, if Adam their father and surety had stood firm in is obedience; so by his fall and disobedience to God, we have lready proved that they are all involved with him in so much of is guilt and misery, as that they come into the world with natures rrupted and vitiated, both with the principles of sin and seeds f death: This we have shewn before: And they are exposed ereby to death, that is, to the common and everlasting forfei-re of all those blessings, and all that life and existence, both f soul and body, which God had freely given them: See ques-on XI. section III. of eternal death. And as for the execu-on of this general sentence, we find it so far executed on ildren, that they suffer the pains and agonies of mortality, and t last bodily death; *though they have not* sinned, that is, per-

sonally and actually, *after the similitude of Adam's transgression*, as in Rom. v. 14. and there the scripture leaves them, that is, in death and the grave.

II. It has been granted, that the actual and personal sin of Adam, might provoke his Maker so far, as to continue his soul in its natural immortality after his bodily life was forfeited and finished; and this is because he was a personal and actual sinner: And God may see it divinely proper, that he should suffer long anguish of conscience, tribulation and wrath after death, according to the aggravation of his personal crime, that is, upon supposition that he accepted not the covenant of grace: Yet it does not follow, that the great God will punish the mere imputed guilt of his infant posterity in so severe a manner; or that he will continue their souls in being, whose whole life and being is forfeited by Adam's sin, and that he will give them their being and life again, and fix them in an immortal state, merely to make them suffer long anguish and endless misery for the sin of Adam. Nor is this severity any where taught us in the word of God; and I am well assured, that our reasonings from the goodness and equity of God will incline us to judge more favourably of his sentence upon infants, and will lead us to the milder and softer side of the question, as I intimated before.

III. There is one very good reason to suppose that the great God will resume the forfeited life and existence of the souls of children as well as of their bodies, and will not continue their immortal spirits to suffer tormenting punishment for ever; because having no personal sin, they can have no anguish of conscience, nor inward vexation: They cannot suffer any self reproaches for sin, for they have committed none: Nor can this be conveyed to them by any imputed guilt of Adam, though it is a very great part of the punishment of souls for actual sin, as being the natural effect of personal transgression and guilt. If therefore they are punished for Adam's sin in another world, it must probably be by actual pains and torments inflicted on them by God himself, since the most natural effects of sin, that is, guilt and anguish of conscience, cannot reach them: And is it agreeable to the nature and mercy of a God to inflict such positive and endless pains or torments with his own hand, on such little creatures, who are free from all personal iniquity, and have no other crime but that they were born of Adam?

IV. If you should imagine that the mere sense of the loss of God's favour, without any actual inflictions of pain, is all the punishment that children shall suffer in their souls; tell me how that can be without some positive and actual agency of God in it? For unless God, some way or other, give them a sense what his *favour* is, and what is the loss of it, how can they have this *knowledge*? And since they have have not lived in this world

long enough to acquire any ideas of *a God, a creature, a law, obedince and transgression, sin and duty, the favour of God, the loss of his favour, punishment, &c.* it is hardly to be supposed, that the blessed God will furnish them with these ideas in a future state of immortality, merely and for no other reason but to make them feel their misery in their eternal loss of the divine favour; and that on no other account, but for having been once born into this world in an unhappy relation to Adam, the actual sinner. Those short miseries which end with life, are much more easy to be accounted for upon the foot of divine resentment for Adam's sin than any everlasting pains.

The late learned Doctor Ridgley indeed, in his Discourses of Original Sin, with modesty and ingenuity has represented this sentiment to the world: And I cannot but declare myself so far of his opinion, that the blessed God will not impress on them these ideas of divine things, nor shew the souls of infants in the other world what are those powers and pleasures which they have lost by Adam's sin, on purpose only to torment those little creatures, who never knew what sin was, nor ever sinned against God in their wills, by actual personal disobedience. But whereas Doctor Ridgley supposes the immortal existence of such infant souls in a sort of stupid ignorance or insensibility, which the scripture no where intimates, I think it is much more natural and reasonable to suppose, that God will deprive both body and soul of life which Adam had forfeited for himself and for them, according to the first threatening of death: And since the book of scripture has not revealed it, I cannot find it in the bookof reason, nor can I conceive what end it can attain in divine providence, to continue so many millions of infant souls in an eternal state of stupor: Is it agreeable to the conduct of infinite wisdom, and the government of a God, to maintain such an innumerable multitude of ideots, equal in number to almost all the rest of the human race, in a long endless duration, and to reign over such an immense nation of senseless and thoughtless immortals? I add yet further, it is very hard to understand how a human soul, which I cannot conceive of but as a thinking being, should exist without any ideas at all, and that for eternal ages. Upon the whole therefore, the state of non-existence, to which we here suppose them to be reduced after death, is much more probable, being the least demerit of imputed sin, or an everlasting forfeiture of life, and a sort of endless punishment without pain.

V. Neither have we any intimations from scripture, that all the bodies of infants will be raised again at the great day, in order to come into judgment.: And if we will suffer ourselves to think and judge without prejudice, we may find it highly probable, that there are many thousands of infant bodies, which will never

be restored to life, nor their persons be summoned to judgment in the last great day; and that for these two reasons:

I. We have before shewn, that as bodily death was threatened by the law of innocency or covenant of works to Adam, as the head of a numerous race, so this is evidently executed upon all his infant-seed; for *death has reigned over them* in every age, as the punishment of Adam's sin, being so far imputed to them; as Rom. v. 12—14. But there is no resurrection of the body included in that threatening; nor can we reasonably suppose, that the most gracious God, who has never threatened it, will raise these infant-bodies into an endless life, merely to suffer everlasting anguish and pain in the body, for the imputed sin of their first father, since they have no actual or personal guilt of their own. Mere imputed sin, without actual transgression, is the least and lowest sort of guilt that can be; and therefore it is highly probable, a righteous and merciful God will inflict on them the least and lowest sort of punishment threatened to sin, that is, death in the mildest sense of it, or an universal and eternal destruction of soul and body, which are forfeited by sin.

II. When the resurrection of sinners is mentioned in scripture, it is always that they may be judged expressly *according to their works, according to what they have done in the body, whether good or evil*; 2 Cor. v. 10. Now infants have done no works of sin or righteousness: They are not moral agents in the infant-state; and it is not said in scriptures, that such shall be brought into judgment. The enquires and decisions of a judgment-seat are only appointed for actual sinners. See the words of scripture on this subject: John v. 28, 29. *The hour is coming, when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they who have done good to the resurrection of life, and they who have done evil to the resurrection of damnation*; Rev. xx. 12, 13. *And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God*, that is, the high and low, rich and poor,—*and they were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up its dead, and death and hell*, or the grave, or the separate state, *gave up their dead, and they were judged, every man according to their works.* Observe here, that the words *small and great* must signify persons of high and low degree, who can be judged according to their works, but the word *small* cannot signify infants, because they have no moral works for which they might be judged*.

VI. And indeed, where any future punishments of the

* And to confirm this sense of the words *small and great*, let it be considered, that in another text of the same writer, these words cannot mean *infants* and adult, but must signify, *poor and rich, or mean and honourable*; Rev. xi. 18. because they are both said to fear the name of the Lord, which cannot be ascribed to infants.

ıer world are represented in scripture, it is always for the tual transgressions of persons who are capable of knowing, using and refusing good or evil, which infants are not capable doing; for the word of God gives us this very character of ı infant; Is. vii. 16. viz, that he *knows not to refuse the evil, ıd chuse the good.* Let us look into the texts where future judgıent and future punishments are described. Ec. xi. 9. "Reıice, O young man, in thy youth,—and walk in the ways of ıy heart, but know thou, that for all these things God will ring thee into judgment," and chapter xii. 14. It is only visıle works of the life, or secret workings of the thoughts, that is, moral actions, "that God will bring into judgment, whether hey be good or evil." Mat. xii. 36. "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment." Mat xxv. 41, 42. "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, for I was an hungered and ye gave me no meat;—I was naked and ye clothed me not, &c." Rom. ii. 3, 5, 6. "Thinkest thou, O man, who judgest them which do such things, and dost the same, that thou shalt escape the judgment of God? Thou treasurest up to thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds." 2 Cor. v. 10 "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that which he hath done, whether it be good or evil." All this refers only to the actual works of men. Nor can I find in the whole book of God, any one syllable of the punishment of infants, either in their souls or bodies after this life; all that the scripture reveals of punishment in a world to come, whether it be in a separate state, or at the resurrection, falls upon those only who have been guilty of actual personal transgressions, and are proper objects of a judgment.

VII. You will ask here, "Is there no resurrection then for the bodies of the infants of good and pious persons, who have repented of their sins, returned to God, and accepted of the covenant of grace in all its extent, for time and eternity? Is there no happy rising-day for the dying children of those parents, who have laid a humble claim to God as their God, and the God of their seed, and have devoted themselves to him according to the language of God's covenant with Abraham? Do not these *blessings come upon the Gentiles through Jesus Christ?* Gal. iii. 14. You will ask, whether I myself have not explained the covenant of grace, with the blessings of it, to extend to the children of believers, or good men, under question XII. section VI? And must all these children lie in the grave and under the power of death for ever? Doth not God's being their God imply their resurrection? Doth not Christ himself prove the resurrec-

tion of the dead from this very principle, that *God is the God of Abraham, Isaac, &c.* Luke xx. 37, 38? And must not such children therefore be raised from the dead? To this I answer:

I have allowed this under the twelfth question, and I confirm it all here: For whatever I have said under this last question concerning infants, relates to those only who stand upon the foot of Adam's broken covenant of works, and have no interest in a better covenant; that is, it belongs only to the children of wicked men who died in Adam, and who have not received or accepted of the covenant of mercy and life through Jesus Christ: But the infant-offspring of those who have repented of sin, and accepted of the covenant of grace, are, in my opinion, included in the blessings of the covenant of Abraham, which come upon Gentile believers and their seed, as well as on the Jews through Jesus Christ, in the spiritual and eternal extent of them; for *Christ was the minister of the circumcision*, or sent to the Jewish nation, *to confirm the promises of God made unto the fathers*, that is, Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, *and that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy.* See Gal. iii. 14. Rom. xv. 8. And therefore there is much reason to believe from many places of scripture, that as they have a share in this covenant of grace and the blessings thereof through the faith or piety of their parents, being incapable to put forth an act of faith and piety themselves, so they shall be raised again to an eternal life of holiness and happiness together with their parents, as the sons and daughters of Abraham who have God for their God.

VIII. As there are several texts of scripture from which I suppose such inferences may be made, so if I mistake not, there are one or two speeches of the prophets which seem to intend and mean the resurrection and happiness of the children of true christians. If we look into Is. lxv. 23. God is there speaking concerning the blessing which shall come upon his people in the christian church, when those Jews who had refused the Messiah were cut off, and God calls his own people *by another name*, that is, christians. The promise is this, *They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble, for they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord, and their offspring with them.* Now we find by experience in all ages of the christian church, that infants die, as well as they did before; and yet it is said, *Their parents shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble:* How can this be fulfilled, but by the right of their children to the extensive blessings of the covenant of grace, that is, a resurrection to eternal life? And it is put upon this foot, that *they are the seed of the blessed of the Lord*, they enjoy the blessing of their father Abraham in whom *all nations are blessed*, that God is their God and the God of their offspring together with them.

The other text is, Jer. xxxi. 15. compared with Mat. ii.

. where the prophet Jeremy is cited; *A voice was heard in ma, lamentation and bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for children refused to be comforted, because they were not. Thus th the Lord, refrain thy voice from weeping, and thy eyes m tears: Thy work shall be rewarded, saith the Lord, and y shall come again from the land of the enemy; and there is e in thy end, saith the Lord, that thy children shall come in to their own border.* Though this prophecy might have ne sort of accomplishment at the captivity of the children of njamin the son of Rachel by Nebuchadnezzar, and the resto-ion of their posterity by Cyrus, yet it seems more literally, inly and expressly to be fulfilled by the slaughter of the ants in Bethlehem near Rama, as St. Matthew explains it, d by their return from the land of the last enemy, death, and ir standing in their own border, that is, in the heavenly maan, where their parents considered in prophecy as true aelites, have obtained the promised inheritance: And thus mother's travail, in bearing the children, as well as her rk of faith and prayer for her children, shall be rewarded by holding them return from the land of death, their common emy, and placed together with themselves in the heavenly radise, which is their border or portion.

It is therefore only the children of wicked parents concern-g whom I suppose the wisdom, justice and mercy of God will n to destroy them entirely by death, or to resume the forfeited e of soul and body. It seems evident to me, that though there e some hints and reasonable hopes of the happy resurrection of e offspring of good men to be derived from scripture, yet all her children in this world are also brought down to death for e sin of Adam by the word of God, and they are left in death: ut neither reason or scripture, so far as I can find, provides y happiness or unhappiness, any reward or punishment for em in a world to come; and how can we go further than reason scripture will lead us? And if I may freely speak my own ntiments here, I would say, since neither reason nor scripture, rtainly and plainly teach us any thing concerning the souls of e infants of wicked men after death; and if I must not leave em in a state of non-existence, I would much rather chuse to ppose them at the death of the body entered into a new and rsonal state of trial, than I would condemn them to a wretched surrection and eternal misery for nothing else, but because ey were born of Adam, the original transgressor. This is ly a comparative thought by the way. But to pursue and pport my present scheme of their annihilation at death, I must swer two or three objections following.

IX. Against this hypothesis it will be perhaps objected, st, of what use can it be for the great God to bring so many

thousand souls of the children of wicked parents into bei
destroy them so soon?

Answer I. Who can tell me of what use it can be fo
to create so many millions of animated beings in the sea,
the woods and deserts for so short a continuance? Who c
why he should exert his almighty power to produce so
myriads of fishes which man never sees, and insects, eng
curious and divine artifice, of which millions are brought f
one day, which are never seen of men, and which in a few
or months perish again, and are lost for ever? It is as eas
omnipotence to create souls as bodies, or to make men as w
And it is the illustrious and inconceivable magnificence
government, that he can produce worlds of such wonderful
tures and destroy them without any loss, though he should
acquaint us with any of his reasons or purposes for this co
Why must such sorry creatures as men are, be acquainte
the designs and reasons of every thing that a God thinks fit

II. Though the purposes and ends of the great God a
above our reach; yet we may suppose God to have thi
design in the creation and destruction of so many childre
to let those wicked parents, as well as their neighbours, s
constant evil of sin in the effects or punishment thereof, e
the sin of Adam in the weaknesses and pains and death of
children; and to keep a lively image of these things alwa
fore the eyes of men, in the continual succession of so
visible agonies and dying groans and deaths of mankind in
youngest hours of life. This same design and effect is att
also by the mortality and deaths of all children, even th
pious parents, whose souls are carried to heaven by the cov
of grace and the faith of their parents. God will have a
nual sense of the evil of this original sin maintained in a
families of mankind, and this is a sufficient reason for his co

X. Let me now mention a second objection against th
of thoughts concerning infants; and that is, if the childr
wicked parents do not rise from the dead, but are destroyed
and body, as lying under the original sentence of death, wi
this opinion tempt parents to be negligent of the lives of
infants? And some perhaps might be tempted to put the
death, that they may not grow up to sin, and thereby e
themselves to eternal misery. I answer, That good persons
not be guilty of this crime; for such wilful and inhuman m
would be a plain proof they had no true religion nor goo
nor interest in the covenant of grace: Nor can they have
such temptation if they walk according to this covenant, be
the blessings of the covenant of grace are secured to their
As for wicked parents, they have so much natural love and
cern for the welfare of their children in this life, and so

regard to any thing of a future world, that there is no great danger of this event. The ties of nature and parental affection in the men of the world are generally much stronger than any thing else that relates to another world. There are many of the wicked among men, who actually believe that children have no future state, and yet we do not find this temptation prevail.

But further, Can we suppose any person can be so mad and inconsistent as to fear the future uncertain danger of God's wrath for a child, if he has no fear of it for himself? Or will he run himself into certain present damnation if he die under such an impious and inhuman sin of wilful murder, in order to secure a child from the future uncertain danger of impenitence and damnation, that is, if it live to man's estate and grow wicked? This is so unnatural a temptation, especially to wicked parents who have little regard to future and eternal things, that if the representation which I have made of the case of infants, be agreeable to reason and scripture, I think the danger of such a supposed possible inconvenience is so small, as is by no means sufficient to refute this scheme of thoughts, or to forbid the publication of it.

XI. I should here also take notice that there is a third objection against my hypothesis; and that is, there have been some persons who suppose we have no need of this annihilating scheme concerning the case of infants, to mollify the severity of it, since in their opinion, one half of the fifth chapter to the Romans represents our Lord Jesus Christ as removing entirely all the guilt of the sin of Adam from mankind, and that the misery and destruction that was brought on the race of mankind, by the fall of their first parents is effectually cancelled and abolished by the obedience and death of the Son of God, excepting only their sickness and natural death of their bodies, which infants are subject to as well as grown persons. But to this I answer, The design of that chapter is to shew, that God has laid as sufficient and solid a foundation in the obedience and death of Christ for the recovery of men from the ruins of their nature, their guilt and misery, in and by the covenant of grace, as Adam had laid for the ruin and destruction of his posterity according to the covenant of works: But as none but the posterity of Adam are involved in his curse, so the blessing is only applied there to those who become the seed and posterity of Christ by faith and repentance, and by accepting the covenant of grace: for it is sufficiently evident from constant experience and observation in opposition to this opinion, that sin and pain and death, which were brought in by the fall of Adam, still infect human nature in every son and daughter of man which comes into the world: and how can these evident consequents and legal penalties of sin continue among infants, if all the guilt and consequent effects of Adam's *sin be taken away from* them by the undertaking of Christ?

Our daily and constant experience abundantly proves that this opinion of the universal and actual abolition of sin, and the curse brought in by Adam on his infant race must be a mere mistake.

XII. And if it should be said still, that this recovery of mankind from the curse by Jesus Christ, so far as it belongs to infants, chiefly refers to their future state after death, and that it ensures salvation universally to all who die in infancy; I might very well answer,

I. That neither do the words of that place of scripture, nor does its connection with the context discover this doctrine there; and I think it would be very hard to prove it without some clearer testimony of scripture. Besides,

II. If we consult the word of God from one end to the other of it, we shall find no blessing or curse coming upon children in their very infancy, but by the covenant or conduct or character of their parents. If the children of Adam die, they are doomed to death together with him; Rom. v. 12—21. If Abraham's seed are blessed, it is together with their father; Gen. xvii. 7—14. If the unbelieving Jews are the branches broken off from the good olive tree, their little buds are broken off together with them; and if the unbelieving Gentiles are grafted into it, their buds or tender offspring are grafted in together with them also; Rom. xi. 17—24. The scripture gives us no account of God's dealing with children in their infancy, but as a part of their parents, and considered as one with them. Now how shall the children of wicked men, according to the current of scripture, be brought into this salvation by Christ, if their parents do not accept nor share in this salvation? In the third place,

III. I would enquire whether this opinion that all infants are saved, doth not much more directly and abundantly expose children to the inconvenience of the foregoing objection, viz. by tempting wicked persons to send them to heaven, either by neglecting or destroying their lives upon earth, in order to convey them to certain happiness. A wicked man, or woman, who has never so many children, will be tempted upon this foot to say, why should I take any care of these children, let them come into the world as fast as they will, and let them die as fast as they come; there are so many more inhabitants of heaven; and why should I nurse them up in life merely to bring them into the danger of hell? Is not this a temptation much greater than that of sending them into non-existence?

IV. I add in the last place, that if all children, dying in infancy, are certainly saved, what are the special privileges which are so often asserted in scripture to belong to the children of pious parents and the seed of Abraham, in having God to be their God? Does not this sufficiently intimate some superior favour

o the children of good men, who have accepted the covenant of grace in Christ Jesus, above what is promised to the children of he wicked, who have broken the covenant of works, and who ave no share in the blessings of the covenant of grace for themselves or their posterity, because they have not accepted of it? Has the offspring of the righteous no advantage of the wicked after all these gracious words of promise? I fear uch an opinion does not bear a kind aspect on the faithfulness of God in his word, to represent and promise that as a peculiar kindness and grace to the children of good men, which equally belongs to all, even the most impious and wicked.

Upon the whole, the opinion of the salvation of all children, s it has no countenance from the bible, so it has no foundation in he reason of things; and the scheme of the transactions of God vith men, as represented in scripture, appears much more conistent and uniform according to the hypothesis I have here proosed. Yet if any of my readers are utterly averse to these entiments, let them find out wherein I have run counter to ie word of God. The scripture brings down the infants of icked parents to the grave, and leaves them there, and so o I: The scripture has not provided any resurrection for iem, neither can I do it. And, in matters of pure revelation, iough we may propose an expedient to solve great difficulies, yet I would be always cautious of asserting what God as not revealed.

CONCLUSION;

Or the Advantages of this whole Scheme.

THUS I have endeavoured to trace out, so far as my ason would assist me, what relief may be given to some of ose doctrines of revelation which seem to have a harsh sound, a painful and disagreeable appearance in them, and which ight seem to lay any imputation upon the conduct of God and ovidence. It is and must be confessed there are some diffiilties which attend the doctrine of original sin and misery reading over all the race of man, and the doctrine of the ving grace of God in Christ Jesus providing a way of recoery for a lost world, even for all that are willing to accept of it, id yet at the same time securing some certain success to the idertaking of Christ in the salvation of *those whom the Father ith given him.* And yet all these seem to be doctrines pretty ainly taught in the holy scriptures: Nor are they mere opinions r speculation, but they have a great and important influence on our *practice.*

If we are well persuaded of original sin, and that our natures are so corrupt and degenerate, we shall learn to *lie humble before a God of majesty and holiness*, which is the very first part of all our religion. We shall also be candid and meek and compassionate towards each other without pride and scorn, being all liable to the same mistakes and infirmities, the same passions and miseries, and being all involved in the same condemnation and degeneracy. And if we shall find that the doctrine of the imputed sin of Adam is so far from being a difficulty or hardship in this article, that it is the only effectual way to solve the propagation of the universal corruption and misery of our natures, and to absolve the conduct of God from all blame, we shall raise no more murmuring cavils against the providence of God herein, but receive it in the light in which the scripture seems to have represented it with all submission and silence. *God is just, though man be sinful and miserable.*

If we are made deeply sensible of our universal guilt and degeneracy in Adam, we shall thankfully rejoice in every discovery of divine mercy, and especially in *the gospel of Jesus Christ, who is the second Adam, and the only appointed way of our salvation:* We shall be more prepared to receive it with greater humility, gratitude and joy, when we see our souls so utterly lost and undone in a state of nature: And we shall depend more entirely upon *the grace of God the Father, and his Son Jesus, and the influences of the blessed Spirit*, for every part of our restoration and recovery. All the doctrines of the special grace of God, of the redemption of Christ, and of the sanctifying Spirit, lie much more easy and obvious before the eye, when we are made deeply sensible of our universal ruin and misery. That humble temper of soul which this doctrine requires, will more readily subdue all the rising cavils of the mind against the methods of saving mercy.

If we believe that the undertaking of Christ is secured of success, and that multitudes of souls shall certainly obtain this salvation, this is matter of thankfulness and hope, since all mankind lay in one common ruin: And we have encouragement to all diligence in the duties of repentance, faith and new obedience, since *he that seeks shall find, and to him that knocks, it shall be opened*; Mat. vii. 8. and since this is the only way for us to obtain our share in the success of the labours and sufferings of Christ, and the blessings that are derived from them. And when we have found our own hearts sincerely and effectually turned to God by the gospel, and our natures and our lives formed unto holiness, we have then high encouragement to believe the security of our interest in the mediation of Christ and the salvation of the gospel, and to rejoice in hope.

And if we take with us also this comprehensive and com-

sionate doctrine of the sincere and extensive offers of mercy :very sinner, according to the degree of the discoveries of the ce of God in the age and nation wherein he lives we shall uire a more large, more generous and diffusive benevolence to our fellow-creatures of the race of Adam: We shall give a ge foundation for hope to every guilty creature among man- d, assuring them that the great God hath debarred none from mercy but those who debar themselves by impenitence and belief. We shall vindicate the goodness and justice of God his dispensations towards men, and leave the final condemna- n of wilful impenitents, and of all the wicked of the earth, irely upon their own heads. If it be enquired, what farther vantages can be derived from so peculiar a doctrine as this last tion contains, viz. *that the children of unregenerate or unholy rents, who never lived to do good or evil, and died only under guilt of Adam's sin, have sustained their whole penalty at th, and will never be raised to life again?* I answer, in these ee particulars:

I. Hereby the conduct of divine providence, with regard to millions of infant creatures in all the numerous nations of the th, will be justified from the severe censures which have been it upon it by men in accusing the doctrine of original sin: For they suffer nothing but *temporal death*, as being fallen in lam their head, all these terrors of pretended cruelty and rerity will vanish, while it appears that eternal damnation be- gs only to those who have been guilty of actual transgression their own persons; for there is not one word in all the scrip- e concerning eternal misery inflicted upon any person merely the sin of Adam.

II. This hypothesis not only absolves the providence of d from supposed cruelty, but perhaps it represents it as good d gracious towards far the greatest part of those that are born Adam; while they are not suffered to live and grow up amidst temptations of this world, and under their present corrupt inciples of nature, but are precluded from rendering themselves re miserable, by being cut off in infancy, and never having it their power to do good or evil themselves.

III. This scheme relieves the difficulties which sometimes ve been cast upon the laws or orders of God given the Jewish tion, to cut off so many thousand children of the Canaanites en they entered into the promised land: For hereby these ildren are subjected only to temporal death as the consequent d penalty of Adam's sin, and are, if I may so express it, cured from eternal misery, by being prevented from growing to imitate the iniquities of their fathers, and to expose them- lves to God's eternal judgment and damnation. If some per- n should *again object*, why then may not men slay their own

infants or any other children out of kindness, to pre growing up to commit actual sins, and exposing thems resurrection and judgment and everlasting misery? these two ways:

I. Because this is directly contrary to the moral law God hath appointed to govern man, viz. *thou shalt not* and the laws of men, as well as the law of God, almos sally forbid all murder of the human race, and requ *for blood.* It is God's prerogative to cut off by death pleases, but he hath not given this prerogative to man he break in upon the grand rule of his governmen world, so far as to give this piece of sovereignty out o hand.

II. Because if men might slay any children at t pleasure, they might slay some who would have gro virtue and religion, and then this infant murder would children off from future and eternal happiness, which wo been very unjust, and which God will never permit. 1 whole it is evident, that the scripture having never in that I can find foretold the resurrection or judgment of fants of sinful parents, and having pronounced the wo only, as the penalty of Adam's sin or their interest in it, nounced the final judgment and eternal misery only ag tual sinners; there is abundant reason to believe that knowingly and wisely appointed and ordered all these tl that his providence might be secure from all charges o and injustice: And perhaps this hypothesis which I h proposed, is nothing else but these very appointments a actions of God set in their proper scriptural light to g providence from censure.

If I have failed in these attempts, let it be remembe all the new or peculiar sentiments which are found h merely offered to the world as probable conjectures dra reason and scripture, to relieve the difficulties which hang on revealed truths. If the method proposed is n cient for this purpose, I shall rejoice to see better solu them given, and to behold them set in a fairer light. 1 have laboured to follow the track of reason, it hath o in order to do more abundant honour to divine revel which I entirely submit my faith and practice; and I s renounce whatsoever is inconsistent with it, for that ca right reason. And let us remember also, that if all our of this kind should fail, yet we may rest assured of tl *God is ever wise and righteous and good,* that all his tran *with men,* how intricate and repugnant soever they may *us,* are highly consistent in his own view, and harmoni *all his* own perfections: We may be assured that we a

and unhappy creatures in ourselves, that there is an all-sufficient salvation provided through Jesus Christ the Son of God, and that every one shall certainly be a joyful partaker of it, who follows the appointed methods of divine grace. True repentance and a sincere return to God, with faith in his mercy, so far as it is discovered to men under every dispensation, and a persevering life of holiness in the love of God and our neighbour, shall not fail of being crowned at last with the favour of God and *eternal life through the mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord:* And whatsoever clouds of ignorance and darkness may continue to surround us here, while we are studying the mysteries of grace or providence, yet we shall see things hereafter in a divine light, where all difficulties and darkness shall vanish for ever.

THREE ESSAYS

ADDED BY WAY OF

APPENDIX:

Wherein are contained some plain Representations of important Points relating to the foregoing Questions.

FIRST ESSAY.

A Debate, whether the present Miseries of Man alone will prove his Apostacy from God?

SECT. I.—*The Follies and Miseries of Mankind in a general Survey.*

THE miseries and follies of the creature man have been an ancient and endless subject of declamation among the writers of *the heathen world*, as well as among *christians*. A just survey of human nature, from its entrance into life, till its retirement from this visible world behind the curtain of death, would furnish us with abundant matter of sorrow and complaint; and we should be ready to say concerning man, *Is this the creature that is so superior to the rest of the inhabitants of this globe, as to require such peculiar care of the Creator in forming him? Is this the animal furnished with such transcendent powers of thought and reason, whereby he is said to be exalted above brute animals? Does he deserve such an illustrious description as Ovid gives of him, after he had described the formation of beasts, birds and fishes?*

> "Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius altæ
> Deerat adhuc, & quod dominari in cætera posset,
> Natus homo est. Sive hunc divino semine cretum
> Ille opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo,
> Finxit in effigiem moderantum cuncta deorum:
> Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram
> Os homini sublime dedit, cœlumque tueri
> Jussit, & erectos ad sidera tollere vultus."

Thus in English:

> "A creature of a more exalted kind,
> Was wanting yet, and then was man designed;
> Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,
> For empire form'd, and fit to rule the rest.

Whether with particles of heavenly fire
The God of nature did his soul inspire,
And borrowing from our earth, on that blest day,
Our new-made earth, a better sort of clay,
And moulding up the mass in shape like ours,
Form'd a bright image of th' all-ruling powers.
Whilst all the mute creation downwards bend
Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,
Man looks aloft; and with erected eyes
Beholds his own hereditary skies."

One would almost imagine this heathen poet had read the nt which Moses the Jewish historian gives of the original ition of man; Gen. i. 26. *And God said, let us make man r image, after our likeness; and let them have dominion the fish, and the fowl, and the cattle.* And chapter ii. 7. *the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and hed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a r soul.* If man was formed in the image of God, certainly as a holy and a happy being; but what is there like holiness ppiness now found running through the rank of creatures s called by the name of MAN? Are there any of the brutal that do not more regularly answer the design of their crea- and act more agreeably to their nature, than this illustrious MAN, that was made to govern them all? Are there any e brutes of the land, the water or the air, that we ever find g so much below their original character as mankind does? are there any tribes amongst them, through which pain, tion and misery are so plentifully distributed as among the and daughters of the first man?

This globe of earth, if it were to be surveyed by some , some immortal being of the superior regions, and ran- d through all the dimensions and corners of it which are ited by our species of creatures, it would be found such a re of folly and madness, such a maze of mingled vice and y, as would move the compassion of his refined nature to nful degree, and almost sink it into sympathy and sorrow, were not tempered and restrained by a clear sight of the nd wise conduct of providence, in permitting all this mis- . But if all these wide and dismal scenes could be grasped e view, by any mortal of a tender and compassionate make, ps it would agonize his better powers into confusion and nzy. Should the poets or philosophers form a just idea of far as our common capacities extend, there would be cri- l and absurd matter enough to furnish a Horace or a Juve- with a thousand jests and sarcasms on their own species, or r with a thousand full satires. There would be follies enough ake the lungs of a thousand Democrituses with endless ter, and there would be miseries enough to raise a fountain ars for each *single* Heraclitus, if such a one had lived in

every city of the universe, and in every age of man since the first creation.

SECT. II.—*A particular View of the Miseries of Man.*

But we will lay aside *the sins and follies of mankind*, and only take his *miseries* into our present view; let us see whether from them alone we cannot infer, that we are a very degenerate race of beings, with most evident marks of the displeasure of our Maker upon us, and under the punishment of the wise and righteous Governor of all things*.

Let us take a turn amongst the historians of the world; and what is almost all history but a description of the wretchedness of mankind, under the mischiefs they bring upon themselves, and the judgments of the great God? The scenes of happiness and peace are very thin set among all the nations, and they have had rather a *transient glimpse* of these bright scenes here and there appearing and vanishing, than any pretences to durable felicity. Let us spread our thoughts over the universe, what public desolations by plague and famine, by storms and earthquakes, by wars and pestilence, which strike and affect our ears continually: Even the report is terrible. What secret mischiefs reign among men, which pierce into the soul, and corrode the vitals of nature? What smarting wounds and bruises what lingering diseases attack and torment the animal frame? Surely those who sustain these maladies would not suppose our great poet had exaggerated matters when he describes them thus, as set before Adam our forefather by the angel Raphael:

"A lazar-house it seemed, wherein were laid
Numbers of all diseas'd, all maladies
Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture, qualms
Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce cattarrhs,
Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
Demoniac phrenzy, moaping melancholy,
And moon-struck madness, pining atrophy,
Consumption, and wide-wasting pestilence,
Dropsies, and asthmas, and joint-racking rheums.
Dire was the tossing, deep the groans, despair
Tended the sick, busiest from couch to couch;
And over them triumphant death his dart
Shook, but delay'd to strike, though oft invok'd."

But lazar-houses are not the only places whereby we may judge of the numbers of the wretched. Where is the family, if there are seven or eight persons in it, wherein there is not one or other of them afflicted with some troublesome malady, or some

* I hope the reader will forgive a short repetition of some of the same thoughts which may be found under the first question in this book: for it was hardly possible to avoid them; especially considering, that these two discourses were written with a distinct view, and were not at first designed to be published in the same book.

:esome weakness or inconvenience? These indeed are oftenmes wisely concealed by the persons who suffer them, and by ıe families where they dwell. But these are the miseries which re discovered, in a glaring light, in the hospitals, the infirmaries, nd the bedlams, which are provided by the public for the poor: And if we were to walk round a nation, we should find perhaps nat in every twenty or thirty households, there were some fflicted and miserable creatures, that would be fit company for hese public monuments of unhappiness, if their private circumtances did not extend to make provision for their support and elief; and in the whole, they would be enough to make half a rovince in a nation, rather than a town or a village.

Let us proceed a little in this enquiry. What toils and hardıips, what dangers and deaths, what inward anxieties and sorıws, disappointments and calamities, are diffused and scattered ırough every age and country of mankind? Do not the rich el them as well as the poor, and the prince together with the ·asant? Are they not all teazed with their own restless and rmenting appetites which are never satisfied, but are still reruing upon them, and their impetuous passions give them no st? What keen anguish of mind arises from pride, and envy, ıd resentment? What tortures and racking disquietudes do sappointments in ambition, or love, and wild jealousy, infuse to the bosoms of the rich, while the poor, together with these ıne inward vexations and corroding maladies of the mind, susin also endless drudgeries in procuring their daily and common bsistence? And how are many of them half starved in their rry cottages, or fed and nourished at a miserable rate?

Let us survey this sorry creature man through every stage: irst, mark what a wretched figure he makes at his entrance to life. *This animal*, says Pliny, *who is to govern the rest of :atures round him, how he lies bound hand and foot, all in ırs, and begins his life in misery and punishment; and for is only reason, because he is born.* Thus, that Roman author, his preface to one of his writings. If we trace the education the human race, from the cradle to the state of mature age, d especially among the poor, which are the bulk of all nations, : wretchedness of mankind will appear still in a mournful light. ow are they dragged up in their tender age in Europe, Asia, rica, and America, through a long train of nonsense, madss, and miseries? What millions of uneasy sensations doth ·ir infancy and childhood endure by reason of those pains and ·ssing necessities which in their youngest years they can tell ly in cries and groans, and which their parents in extreme porty cannot relieve, or they are so brutish and savage that they ll not do it? How wretchedly are these young generations rried onward through the folly and weakness of childhood,

under these miseries, till the addition of new calamities, from their own crimes and madnesses, their ungoverned appetites and passions, swells the load to a huge and painful degree? They practise what they have seen with their fathers, and are plunged into early mischief.

As youth advances, the ferments of the blood rise higher, and the appetites and the passions become much stronger, and give more abundant vexation to the race of mankind, than they do to any of the young brutal creation, whether in air, earth, or sea. Their natural appetites are abundantly relieved and satisfied without those vexing cares, anxieties and inconveniences, which beset mankind of both sexes in the same part of life. The same desires and inclinations which belong to the rest of the animal kind, attack the human race also, but with greater rage and violence, and seem to demand their present gratification: And that, as has been observed by moralists, not at one season of the year only, but at all seasons, with more constancy than in other creatures, and give the younger crouds of mankind many more disturbances. The all-wise God the Creator, for just and kind designs and reasons, has limited the gratification of these appetites by rules of virtue and piety: But perhaps these very rules and confinements, however *holy, just and good*, have served very much through the corruption of our nature, to irritate and provoke mankind to greater excesses, and pursue their vitiated animal inclinations with warmer violence than ever man would have been exposed to in the days of innocence. So the heathen writers confess:

"Nitimur in vetitum semper, cupimusque negata."

"*We are ever desiring forbidden things, and press after unlawful delights.* So St. Paul acknowledges; Rom. vii. 8. *Sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence.* So a wild young bull or a lion would beat themselves against the grates and restraining bars of their prison, and make more furious assaults there to gain their full freedom. And in the midst of these distracting circumstances of mankind, between the law of God and their own appetites, they lead sometimes but a miserable and most unquiet life. If their inclinations are gratified in an unlawful manner, what anguish of conscience, what inward vexations and keen reflections of mind perpetually haunt and torment them! What terrible and pressing temptations assault them to conceal their shame, by the murder of themselves, or the harmless babes to whom they gave birth and life! How shameful and hateful are the scenes of life into which they bring their wretched offspring? How innumerable and grievous the inconveniences which they entail upon their young spurious descendants? What lasting reproach and distress, with beggary and long sorrow?

Or, if they pursue their desires in a lawful manner, how happy are the bulk of the extreme poor? And yet how many ousands are there that are but just capable of providing food d raiment for themselves in the world, who, after some conflict th these restless inclinations, rush into the connubial state and sery at once? How unable are they to provide the same cessaries for a young nursery of mortals, a new increasing neration? What endless solicitudes, night and day, afflict em in their contrivances to support themselves and their infant ood? And what a length of years is it before these young lpless creatures can possibly release their parents from this care d anxiety, and are capable of providing food and raiment for emselves? Would the affairs of human life in infancy, childod, and youth, have ever been constituted in such a sore and inful situation, if man had been such a being as God at first ade him; and if he had always stood obedient to his Maker, d continued in his favour? Could divine wisdom and goodss admit of these scenes, if there had not been some great and iversal degeneracy spread over all the race, which, by the wise d righteous permission of God, exerts itself some way or ner in every stage of life?

If we follow this track which mankind treads to the perfecn of manhood, the age of public appearance and activity upon e stage of the world, what shall we find there but infinite cares, ours and toil, attended with fond hopes almost always frustrad, warm wishes scarce ever fulfilled, endless crosses and dispointments, through ten thousand accidents that are every oment flying across this mortal stage; and whatever their purits be, whether honour or wealth, ease or pleasure, some interning incidents or oppositions blast all their designs, and plunge em into long vexation. As for the poor, who have no such rsuits, but seek their bread from day to day, how does the ktry toil exhaust their lives in summer, and what pinching rving wretchedness do they feel among wintry snows and orms? How is a miserable and distressed life sustained among l the fatigues and pains of nature, the oppression, cruelty and orn of the rich, and their own inbred maladies both of body d mind, as I said before?

Let us follow on the track of this sorry life, and enter into e scenes of old and decrepid age; how innumerable and how expressible are the disasters and sorrows, the groans and aches, e pains and wretchednesses that spring up every where to meet is poor long-lived animal on the borders of the grave, before ey plunge him into it? And indeed is there any person upon rth, high or low, without such distressing difficulties, such ossing accidents and perplexing cares, such troubles, such pain-l infirmities such disquieting fears, anxieties and sorrows, in

in this view, look like *an innocent tribe of creatures, or in the original state of favour with their Maker?*

To talk of solid comfort and satisfaction, and real happiness to be enjoyed in this life, is contrary to all the common sense and experience of almost every thoughtful man who has taken a just survey of these numerous scenes of evil. Sorry satisfaction indeed, and poor comfort in the midst of such superior miseries! If a man were placed in some upper region, and had the wisdom of an angel, with all that just knowledge and experience what true happiness is, and could look down from above, and take a complete survey of human life, even in its best circumstances, as things now stand, and as it is supposed to be enjoyed by some of the happiest men on earth, without the hopes of a better life afterwards, he would be very loath to accept of it; nor indeed would it be worth his acceptance.

Is there an angel in heaven who would not rather chuse to lose his existence at once, than to be sent into our world, and trace the round of twenty or thirty, or threescore years of human life, without any hereafter? And indeed, were it not from a principle of obedience to God, and from the hopes of a happy futurity, after we have piously and honourably sustained the labours, miseries and trials of this life, I know not what wise man would willingly come into these tiresome scenes of mortality, or go through them with any patience.

What! To be trained up from infancy, under so many necessary follies, unavoidable prejudices, and wretched delusions, through the power of flesh and sense? To be sunk into such gross ignorance both of our souls, our better selves, and of the glorious being that made us? To lie under such heavy shades of darkness, such a world of mistakes and errors as are mingled with our little faint glimpses, and low notices of God our Creator? What! To be so far distant from God and endure such a long estrangement and utter absence from the wisest and best of beings, in this foolish and fleshly state, with so few and slender communications with or from him! What! To be in bondage to so many powerful and disquieting appetites, so many restless and unruly passions, which want the perpetual guard of a jealous eye, and a strong restraint over them, and which will be ever breaking out into some new mischief, notwithstanding our everlasting watchfulness! What! To be ever surrounded with such sort of dangerous delights of sense, which though they were much safer in the innocent state, yet are now constant and strong temptations to folly, guilt, and misery! To have scarce any joys but what are closely attended with huge dangers? To have no satisfactions but what we are liable to pay dear for by excessive or irregular indulgence, and which are most likely to become the means of transgression and lasting anguish, either to the mind,

the body, or both! Can this be a desirable state for any wise angelic being, who knows what happiness is, to be joined to ch a body as ours, to be united to such a disorderly machine of esh and blood, with all its uneasy and unruly ferments?

These which I now mentioned are indwelling mischiefs, hich teaze and defile the soul: But there is another train of bred miseries which affect this sensible nature of ours, this imal frame, with huge agonies and distresses. What wise irit would willingly put on such flesh and blood as ours is, with l the springs of malady and pain, anguish and disease in it? 'hat! To be in danger continually of the racking disquietudes gout and stone, and all the distempers I cited from Milton's em! What! To have nature worn out by slow and long aches d infirmities, and lie lingering for many years on the borders death before we can find a grave! And besides all these inbred ils, to be ever exposed to those innumerable grievances which me from abroad! What! To be ever subject to the common ngers, to the numberless casualities and injuries of nature, to infinite bruises of the flesh, and mischiefs which attend and flict this mortal life, and to bear the endless inconveniences of changing seasons, frost and storms, and sultry sun-beams in s elementary world, and which more than half of mankind exposed to, even with little or no relief! What! To be subt to the frequent insults of injustice, to the frauds of the crafty, violence of the great, and the reproaches and oppressions of l neighbours, to endure the private bickerings and domestic arrels of families, the feuds and resentments, and teazing cations of kindred, with tormenting jealousies and uneasises among nearest friends! To be ever disturbed with the rry, buzz, and confusion of real and pretended men of busis, and to lie open to the follies, weaknesses, and impertices of those we must daily converse with! Add to this the rors and tears of infancy, the ridiculous humours, the silly cations, and the real sorrows of childhood, with all the snares l mischiefs that attend our youth, the laborious and uneasy ls of acquiring any knowledge, and fulfilling the necessary ployments of life in our young and vigorous years, and the bing through long successions and cares, both personal and blic, with all the private teazing uneasinesses which arise from nily and domestic concerns in a manly state.

Go on with these trains of wretchedness, the grievous currences and disasters, the intemperance and succeeding inpositions to which at all ages are we continually liable, the risks l hazards we must sometimes run, both of health, and ease d safety, in procuring the necessaries of life, the constant ays of manly vigour, amidst the infirmities and the aches of l *age, the pangs of dissolving* nature, and the agonies of

death: I say, upon a complete survey of all these hardshi which the wisest and best of men cannot escape, I hardly thin there is one spirit in heaven, or one man of equal wisdom, such were found on earth, that would accept of this life in it common circumstances, or even its most favourable appearance if his existence were to terminate at death, and he had no re spect or reference to a better life to come.

Solomon, that wise prince and philosoper, seems to be mucl of this mind, when, after a survey of the whole scheme of humai life in its variety of scenes, without the views of hereafter, h declares that *he praised the dead which were already dead, mor than the living which are yet alive: Yea, saith he, better is h than both they, even he who hath not been, and hath not seen th evil work that is done under the sun*; Ec. iv. 2, 3*. And upon the comparison of things, I must confess myself of Solomon' mind; for it appears to me, that the calamities and miseries o life are so numerous, as to over-balance all its real comforts, and sufficiently shew that mankind, in its present state, is not it Maker's favourite, but lies under evident marks of his displea sure, on the account of some great and universal degeneracy from the innocence of that state wherein man was first created Having drawn this inference from all the foregoing views o human life and circumstances, I would propose here, in thei fullest light, the three strongest objections I ever met with, o that I could ever think of, against all these reasonings, and thei endeavour to answer them.

SECT. III.—*Answers to Objections against this Argument.*

I. The first objection is this: Can mankind in general b called miserable creatures, when there is not one in a hundre of them but uses all his art and skill to preserve himself in thi life, and continue his situation? Do not all mankind strive t secure their lives, and maintain their abode in this state, wit all the supposed miseries of it? Now, must not every man judg for himself, whether he is happy or no? Surely he would no seek to continue his existence in misery: And therefore if th real sorrows of life were greater than the pleasures and satisfac tions of it, every man would be glad to be rid of his life, whic makes him capable of these sorrows? I answer, in the first place

I. That wheresoever any thing of a future state of reward and punishments is known and believed, it is no wonder men ar unwilling to die; for they being generally conscious of so mucl sin and guilt, cannot think themselves to have a certain claim t

* That great man of antiquity Cicero, is much of Solomon's opinion, whe be asserts *humanam conditionem satis per se miseram esse*, in his discourse of conso lation; and, in the same, he adds also, *non nasci longe optimum, nec in ha scopulos vitæ incidere.*

ire happiness; and therefore when they die, they know or they must be exposed to the punishment which is prepared for ninals in another world. Their aversion therefore to death, l the fear of it, even though they are in a miserable state, ies not so much from any sense of present happiness, which y are loath to lose, as from a fear or suspicion of taking a adful leap in the dark into greater misery.

There are some of our English poets who have said very tinent things on this occasion, and I have read the citations of m on this subject.

> "Distrust and darkness of a future state
> Make poor mankind so fearful of their fate.
> Death in itself is nothing: But we fear
> To be we know not what, we know not where."

And another thus:

> "Aye; but to die, and go we know not whither:
> ——————for this warm body to become
> A kneaded clod, and the delighted spirit
> To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside
> In thrilling ice;* or to be worse than worst
> Of those we fancy howling in long torment;
> This is too humble——————
> The weariest and most loathed worldly life
> That pain, age, penury and imprisonment
> Can lay on nature, it is a paradise
> To what we fear of death."

Again, in another place, the same writer says,

> "If by the sleep of death we could but end
> The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to; 'tis a consummation
> Devoutly to be wish'd.
> Oh! who could bear the whips and scorns of time,
> Th' oppressor's wrongs, the poor man's contumely,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of th' unworthy takes,
> With all the long calamities of life,
> When he himself might his quietus make
> With a bare bodkin? Who would bear such burdens,
> And groan and sweat under a weary life,
> But that the dread of something after death,
> That undiscover'd country from whose border
> No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
> And makes us rather bear those ills we have,
> Than fly to others which are all unknown?"†

And it is very evident daily that multitudes would put an end heir own life at once, if they were sure they could put an end their souls and all their nature, and send themselves into

* The poet supposes these torments in the future state.

† This author, as we are told by the critics, was as well skilled in describing ian nature as any writer whatsoever: and it is only in this view that I have this lines.

annihilation and nothingness. It is this wise and dreadful guard which the blessed God has set against self-murder, this terrible and eternal curse of hell and damnation, which constrains many miserable creatures to endure the sorrows of this life, and powerfully withholds them from the destruction of themselves. Their many and wilful crimes and innumerable sins of which they are conscious, forbid their hopes of a happy hereafter, and therefore they rather chuse to wear out life under their present and painful burdens, than plunge into an eternity of unknown miseries. It is one of these the poet introduces, crying out pathetically

> "O that the everlasting had not fixt
> His cannon 'gainst self-murder!"

If you should tell me, the heathens have no knowledge of this heaven or this hell which christianity and the bible acquaints us with, and yet they through many generations are fond of living, and strive to continue long in this life, notwithstanding all the pretended miseries of it; I would cite some of the ancients, as well as modern travellers, to make a reply for me: They would tell us that there is scarce any part of the heathen world, where they have not some notions and fears of punishment in a future state for the sins committed in this life, and particularly in the more polite nations of heathenism, they tell us, how unhappy self-murderers are made in that unseen and future world. When Virgil has brought his hero into the world of ghosts, he particularly opens the scene before him,

> "Where Minos dooms the guilty souls.
> The next in place and punishment are they,
> Who prodigally throw their souls away.
> Fools, who repining at their wretched state,
> And loathing anxious life have hurried on their fate:
> With late repentance, now they would retrieve
> The bodies they forsook, and wish to live;
> Their pains and poverty desire to bear,
> To view the light of heav'n, and breathe the vital air:
> But fate forbids: The Stygian floods oppose;
> And, with nine circling streams, the captive souls inclose."

Thus you see the heathen writer makes this life miserable enough, though he shews their greater wretchedness and misery, who plunge themselves, at their own pleasure into the other world, in order to abolish and fly from the distress of the present life. But in the second place, I answer:

II. Suppose this aversion to death, and this love of life to be very universal over all the world, and that without regard to any future state; suppose that all mankind had rather continue in existence in the midst of all their calamities and plagues, than venture into non-existence, and cease to be; this will not prove that mankind is happy: For the God of nature, for wise ends, *hath* wrought this love of life into our flesh and blood originally, *and* mingled it with all animal natures whatsoever, in order to

re the works of his hands; so that the love of life, or re-
:e against dying, is owing to the strong mechanic and ani-
nciples of self-preservation, without any formed and sedate
ent of reason, whether it be best to continue in life or no,
ther this life has more happiness or misery. I answer
the third place:

II. That far the greatest part of mankind do not pass a
ıd just judgment on things, nor wisely balance the right
of them: All their faculties are engrossed, and their spirits,
ere, intoxicated with present sensible things they enjoy,
they march onward in the rounds of human life, without
ıg; and therefore as painful, and as miserable as this state
they cannot tell how to think of parting with it. They
thousand calamities rather than venture into non-existence.
of drunken fellows in a prison, and in chains, who
be scourged once a day, yet they are still drinking and
ıg and indulging their sport and merriment, thoughtless
scourge; but can these men be called happy? or will any
ıan assent to their judgment of their own state?

Perhaps it may be objected still, that in order to make up
ıantity of happiness, and to judge aright of it; we must
n the temper of the person, as well as his circumstances
n and pleasure. An indolent man may be happy with half
ıantity of delights and relishing joys, which his gay and
ıtly neighbour requires to his happiness. A hero may be
under such loads of calamity, as would render a weak mind
able. A vulgar and ignorant creature may be happy in the
of such low and foolish delights, which would disgust the
and give them pain. The glutton and the drunkard rejoice in
happiness as would be scorned and despised by a man of
and philosophy. Now if we consider the bulk of man-
of such tempers and tastes as they have, they must be said
ıappy, if they enjoy the good they desire, though it be but
y good, or rather an evil in the opinion of the wise and
al: And on this account men generally do and will pre-
e to death, and their existence here, such as it is, to non-
nce, even though there should be no hereafter. In answer
reply;

I must grant it in a great degree; but then I say that the
on satisfactions and delights of this life, which the bulk of
ind call their happiness, are most of them of so low and
ıerate a nature, and many of them so criminal, that it is a
gn that the intelligent creature man must be fallen from the
ıal excellence of his nature, from his best principles of wis-
and from the favour of his God, before he can make him-
ıappy in such enjoyments. Let it be called his happiness,
ı will have *it so, since he* chuses it, and is loath to part with
t it is such a paltry happiness as no creature of reason

would chuse, if he stood in the complete original rectitude his nature, in the image and the love of his Creator, and in t true exercise and vigour of his intellectual and reasoning power He must have lost these original glories before he can think hi self happy in such toys and follies, amidst all the evils and cal mities that attend this mortal state.

II. The second objection is this: If brutes suffer the sam miseries, and yet they have never sinned, how can these mis ries prove that man is an apostate or degenerate being? D not all brute creatures, the beasts and birds, and the insects o the earth, lie continually subject to the same pains, calamitie accidents, diseases and death, which attend upon mankind And did their progenitors sin and offend God, or have they them selves offended him? Do not the cow and the hind, and mos of the four-footed mothers bring forth their young with extrem pain? Do not the bear and the lion, and the wolf, howl an *roar for want of food*, hunt and toil for their prey, and live some times in starving circumstances, pinched with keen hunger fo whole days together? Is not the horse exposed to almost a many maladies as the man that rides it? And are not the crea tures of this species extremely miserable under the wild and ma passions of their drivers? Survey the beasts of draught or o burden, under the furious scourges of the men that use them What endless lashes they are exposed to, and what rude an pernicious strokes do they bear from any instrument within th reach of their enraged rulers, even while the laborious creature are straining all their sinews, and even burst their nerves an their eye-balls in tugging at their unreasonable loads at the bro of a hill? And after a little food, whereby nature is refresh ed, and a little sleep, wherein life is forgotten, these wretche animals are called again to the team and harness to undergo thei daily round of hardships and miseries? And have any of the creatures, or their ancestors, sinned against God? Are not th race of dogs ever snarling, quarrelling and fighting? And surel everlasting brawls and battles are misery enough.

Again, are not the feebler creatures, both wild and tame subject to the cruel and perpetual ravage of birds and beasts o prey? Do not these animals live by devouring one another and tearing their flesh from their bones, ere they are quite dead and this according to the very constitution of their natures? An even the milder fowls, who seem so innocent and harmless, th partridge and the red-breast, and the chicken, do they not de vour millions of insects, as their constant and appointed food! Are not the mangled bodies and limbs of the hare and the sheep the dove and the thrush, subject to extreme pain when they are torn and bruised, and half eaten by the tyger and the wolf, the *eagle* and the hawk? And do not all those milder and gentler creatures occasion millions of painful sensations to the living in-

ts which they prey upon, viz. the ants, and the flies, and the rms? And have any of these sinned against their Maker, or generated from the first laws of their creation? Again, I would quire, are not harmful and bloody accidents much more com- n among many of the brutes than they are amongst mankind? horse stalking over an ant-hill shall crush a hundred of the sy inhabitants with his broad and heavy foot, lay a whole king- m in desolation at once, and leave multitudes of their little embers bruised and broken, and the tiny creatures expiring in guish? And if their organs were strong enough to form a ind which could reach our ears, what shrill outcries and eams, what dying groans, what innumerable accents of misery uld arise from this little mangled nation, and pierce the heart a compassionate traveller on every such accident? And let ask now, did these diminutive animals, these tiny atoms of ing ever offend the hand that formed them? Or are they in a rse state or condition than they were at first formed? or are y liable to any new accidents which their original nature and stitution does not expose them to?

Yet further let us ask, do not sweeping storms and famine l pestilence sometimes make wretched havoc among whole ions of the brutal kind, and spread the fields and the woods h distress and desolation? And in fine, do not the distempers nature which are found amongst them, or the length of years ng them all down to death, and sometimes with tedious onies and convulsive pangs? And yet can we say that God angry with them, or that they are under any worse circum- nces of life than what God at first formed them for? But let pursue the detail of their miseries yet further. Doth not man stroy thousands of them continually for his own food, and that divine appointment? Are not birds snared by the fowler in a rtal net, or shot in flocks with murdering gun-powder and gines of spreading destruction? And the rest which escape flight, how painfully do many of them drag on a lingering e among wounds and bruises? Are not oysters churned alive tween our teeth? Are not millions of living shell-fish boiled death in caldrons, and finny animals in shoals taken out of e sea and rivers, and while leaping with life, they are fried in rning oil, or other scalding liquids? How many painful cir- mstances must some of these creatures necessarily pass through, en if we would catch and fit them for our food in the easiest anner? But generally their manner of dying is more pain- l misery, and death is brought upon multitudes of the brute- eation, merely as they are the appointed support of men and her animals, besides all the other accidents, pains and diseases at attend them.

Now notwithstanding all these miseries which are spread

amongst the various brutal tribes in earth, air and water, yet we suppose them still to pass all the days of their existence according to the rank of their beings, and the condition of nature which the wise and righteous Governor has assigned them. We look upon them all as innocent beings, for they are capable of no sin nor guilt, and therefore all these tortures and agonies which they sustain are no punishments; they having never done any thing to give offence to their Maker: and yet, says the objector, you must either allow these brutes to have sinned against their Creator, since he appoints or suffers so many calamities to attend them in the very course of nature, or else you must confess that mankind may sustain all the scenes of misery which are before described, without being under any peculiar displeasure of their Maker; and man, at least in his infancy and childhood, may be such a creature still as he came out of the hands of God, notwithstanding the vices he learns to practise as he grows up, and all these shapes of wretchedness which he is exposed to, and which are dressed up in this discourse into so formidable a spectacle. I think I have spread out this objection in its complete force; and in order to answer it, I ask leave to propose the following considerations:

I. It has been the opinion of many divines that all these varieties of wretchedness came upon the brutal creation as a general curse for the sin of man, who was the chief inhabitant and lord of this lower world; and therefore these brute-creatures which were, as it were, his slaves, are punished together with him; so that they suppose the sin of man brought misery into all the ranks of this lower creation, as well as into his own kind. But I must confess I never well approved of this solution of the difficulty; for though I know men may oftentimes, by their perverse wills, abuse these creatures of God, yet the continual calamities that they fall into by being the natural and appointed food of men and of one another, as well as by unhappy accidents, by injuring, wounding, or killing casualties, by diseases, old age and death, are all ordained of God their Creator, as the God of nature, and in the common course of things, without any special reference to the sins of men, as the moral and procuring cause. I can hardly persuade myself that God made so many millions of sensible creatures so miserable, or would permit them to be so, who are in themselves perfectly sinless and innocent, and have no manner of proper relation to any sinful head or stock, such as the first man is justly supposed to be to his own species; of which we have discoursed elsewhere. I proceed therefore to the second consideration.

II. The scripture on one hand gives us a plain account, *that man originally was not made to die, and that the death of mankind was brought in only by sin*; Rom. v. 12. and all the evils

t attend human nature are derived from the same spring; ause man was wholly at his first formation *in the likeness of d, who made him in the image of his holiness and his happi-s*, and designed him to live for ever, if he continued inno-it; Gen. i. 26. and chapter ii. 17. But on the other hand, the ipture teaches us that *brutes originally are made to die, and 'd beasts made to be taken and destroyed*, partly for the natural d of man, and partly for his safety and ease; Gen. ix. 3. Peter ii. 12. Besides, it is evident to reason, and constant ob-vation, that brutes are appointed for food for each other, as ing insects for the spider, small birds for the hawk, and sheep wolves and lions. Now this cannot be without wounds and uises, and mortal convulsions, and death. It is manifest there-re, that we may infer guilt from the endless pains, calamities, d death of men, because scripture reveals it, as the original use; but we cannot infer the same from the sicknesses, unds and deaths of brute-creatures, which are made by the d of nature for food to others, nor from all the appearances pain and anguish which are found among the brutal crea-n: These must be solved therefore, and explained some ier way.

III. The objection here supposes, that all the brutal crea-n have really the same acute sensations of anguish and pain as ankind, because many of them make use of the same sort of unds and motions, groanings and howlings, and distortions of ibs, as we do when we are under acute pain. But it is hard suppose that a righteous and merciful God should inflict such en and extreme anguish upon millions of creatures whose race d generations are sinless, and perfectly innocent, and entirely ch as they came out of his own hands; or that he should, in e course of nature, permit it to be inflicted, without any de-ee of sin or moral evil in any of them to deserve it. And I ink therefore it would be much more eligible and rational, th some modern philosophers, to suppose that brutes being ade of mere matter, have no proper sensations of pleasure of pain; or at least that all their sensations of pain are it feeble and dull, and very imperfect, notwitstanding all eir hideous outcries and convulsions of their flesh; I say, it more rational to think so, than it is to suppose that there any such sharp agonizing anguish and keen torment as sin-l men endure, provided by the blessed God for creatures which e perfectly innocent, and which have no relation to any guilt r crime*. Will a God of infinite equity and goodness inflict

* If we were to consult reason and scripture jointly on this head, would they ot both incline us to believe, that brutal sensations are not quite the same, nor ar so intense as the sensations of mankind? for scripture, as well as reason, ach us, that the very soul and life and supreme principle of action in brutes is

so much natural evil where there is no moral evil? It is probable that the sheep when he receives the mortal wound in his throat, feels as much pain as the swine, though the one is mute and silent, and the other sounds out his death with grievous shrieks and outcries: and perhaps if we had never seen nor heard any creature wounded or dying but a sheep or a fish, or an insect, who are mute, we should never have thought that the brutal sensations of pain were so keen, as those which human nature feels: Therefore if we judge merely by groans and clamours, we must suppose some creatures feel very little or no pain from their wounds and death; and yet why should the blessed God appoint so much less pain for the sheep than for the swine? Nor are the most grievous outcries and contortions of the flesh in other noisy animals a sufficient proof to our reason that they feel such sort of pain, or so intense as man does, and consequently we cannot make the same inference from their sufferings as we do from those of mankind.

IV. But supposing brutes have sensations of pain as sharp as ours, yet if they have a proportionable and equal quantity of sensations of pleasure through the course of their low life, then put these pains and pleasures of the brutal life into the balance, and the amount of them in the whole makes neither happiness nor misery; or perhaps their pleasing sensations exceed the painful; then they are happy; for misery is only found where the pain exceeds the pleasure in degree, or duration, or both; and that state is happiness, where, upon the whole survey, the pleasure exceeds the pain. But in mankind it is pretty certain that their natural maladies, as well as the painful and afflictive accidents that attend most or all of them in this foolish and sinful world; far exceed the natural maladies or painful accidents which attend brute-creatures; for amongst them there is little or no intemperance to disorder their own natures; no wars to destroy millions of their fellows; no engines of cruelty and death among them to multiply the miseries of their own species; and upon the whole it is evident enough that the pains and sorrows and evils in almost every human life greatly exceeds the joys or pleasures of it, and consequently render man in this world but a miserable creature.

V. Let us remember also that brutes have no proper reflec-

their blood *which goes downward to earth* when the brute dies. Solomon and Moses seem to agree in this sentiment with some later philosophers; Lev. xvii. 11, 14. Eccles. xii. 7. But the soul of man is of a noble original, a thinking spirit proceeding immediately from God, and at death *ascending upward, or returning to God who gave it.* Now can we suppose that mere blood and flesh have any sensations or perceptions above the capacity of matter? Can they possibly have such intense and keen sensations as a spirit, a mind, a thinking immaterial power, *akin* to angels, but united to flesh and blood? Would the all wise and righteous Creator form creatures capable of such intense torments, who are not, nor ever were, capable of offending him in the least instance?

on on things past, but only a sensation of the present: But man sides all the pains of sense, has also the long and grievous easinesses that arise from remorse and anguish of mind, reflect-g upon his own evil conduct in time past, and dismal presages ad terrifying agonies arising from the constant fear and expect-tion of what may come; so that as mankind is generally subject more pains and weaknesses, more diseases and uneasinesses the body than brute-creatures; so the addition of uneasiness of ind, which arises from a long remembrance of, or reflection on ast sorrows, are as it were, a new sensation of them, and agonies f conscience for past sins, are new misery; besides the terrible rethought and expectation of future evils, whether in this life, r in the world to come, do very much increase the miseries of uman nature beyond that of the brutal world, since they are upposed to have no reflection no forethought. And it is not only he long and keen passion of remorse and sorrow arising from ast sins or moral evils, and of fear and dread from the prospect f future miseries, which makes mankind more unhappy than rutes, who have no such retrospects nor foresights to torment hem; but every uneasy passion of human nature, even grief nd sorrow for natural evils, wrath, envy, malice, rage, jealousy, isappointment and despair, with all their dreadful train, are ore keen and intense in the breast of man, make much deeper pressions on his heart, and sharper incisions into all the tender owers of his nature than brutes ever know or feel: They last so much longer; they dwell upon the spirit for days and months, d years; they mingle with the soul, and imbitter every sweet f life.

Brutal passions, should we allow them to be as strong, yet ey are much fewer and more transient: The common calls of ature to eat or sleep, to sport or daily toil, abolishes the painful ssion, the ill ferment subsides, the uneasiness vanishes, the use of it is forgotten, and the creature is soon easy and happy gain. But some of these uneasy passions of human nature eave so close to the soul, that men cannot get rid of them; they ing like an adder, and prey upon the heart like a vulture, they aze the spirit day and night, they take away all appetite to od, and all the sweet relief and power of sleep. Was there er an instance of a brute-animal whose passions ever wrought t such a scene of miseries for him as the unruly powers of man-nd are daily working, and that not in one or two, but in multi-ides of the human kind? Upon all these views I think it must e acknowledged, that the evils which mankind suffer in the pre-ent state, are much superior to those of brutes, and consequent-y as they surmount all the pleasures of human life; so man must e pronounced miserable upon the balance of the whole; and herefore we must infer, that we of the human race cannot be in

our Maker's esteem a race of guiltless beings, since our portion in general in this life is superior pain and wretchedness: and especially since we find both by reason and scripture, that whatsoever calamities and death attend brutes, these, for wise purposes, are appointed by the God of nature, though they are without sin, while the calamities and death of mankind are expressly attributed to sin in the word of God.

Objection III. If the miseries of all mankind, or even of the biggest part of them in this life, are so great as to overbalance all their comforts, so that a wise spirit would never willingly consent to be dressed in our flesh and blood, and be born into our present world; then we can have no reason to give God our Creator any thanks for our existence or life, since this is no blessing, and it would have been far *better for us never to have been born*. Now is it possible that the great God should make a creature who has not reason or just cause to thank him for his being?

Answer, If any creature who comes into our world, hath more probability of being happy than of being miserable in this life; he has reason to bless God for his existence in proportion to the probability of his happiness: But if a creature has more probability of misery than happiness in life, I cannot see that life is any blessing or privilege; nor can I see how he can rationally bless or give thanks to the great God for it, considered in itself, and abstracted from a future state. And I add yet further, if any creature who comes into this world has a greater probability of being foolish and sinful here, and miserable hereafter, than he has of being wise and holy here, and happy in the other world; neither then can he with reason bless God, or give thanks to the Author of his being merely for his existence, or coming into life into such a sinful wretched world.

Now since this is the case, that the bulk of *mankind are born to trouble and misery here*, as Job v. 7. and as we have sufficiently shewn before; and if they are also most likely to run into sin and folly in this world, and misery in another, for almost *the whole world lies in wickedness*; 1 John v. 19. and there are *few who shall be saved*; Mat. vii. 14. this prospect certainly forbids our mere existence or entrance into such a life to be called a blesssing; and consequently we cannot reasonably give thanks merely on that account to the almighty Being that made us. There has been indeed a bold and severe charge brought against this opinion, viz. *that it is a very high degree of ungodliness; that it greatly diminishes, if not totally excludes the goodness and mercy of God, and consequently forbids our gratitude, and discourages our hope and trust.*

Answer. It is a bold and grievous accusation indeed, but it wants all proof. Our saviour himself has shewn us that it is cer-

ain, the bulk of mankind *walk in the broad way to destruction, and but few find the gate of life;* Mat. vii. 13, 14. This alone s sufficient ground to maintain a probability of persons in general, who come into this world, being miserable rather than happy: And in this view how can mankind with reason give thanks to their Maker for mere existence, which in the present fallen state, exposes us rather to misery than happiness? And the arguments which are used to oppose this opinion are so weak and ill-grounded, that I chearfully leave them to the sense reason and conscience of every sincere reader to answer and refute them, though they are made a foundation for several unjust triumphs. But if the case be so, whence comes this dreadful scene, this dismal situation of things, that an intelligent creature cannot thank God for creating him? Not from God the Creator, whose justice and goodness would never have suffered him to have created original beings as they came from his hands in such a situation as this: There must have been some dreadful ancient apostacy from God their Creator, some general degeneracy and curse of a broken law or covenant, under the spreading desolation whereof mankind come into this world; nor is there any other way that I can imagine or guess at, whereby the justice and goodness of God the Creator can be secured and vindicated from such hard imputations.

And though it is the blessed God that creates or forms fallen mankind from day to day, who come into such a situation and such wretched circumstances, yet it is all according to such an original law of nature or divine constitution made for innocent man, which was *holy, just and good* in itself. It is true the great God foresees that millions will now be miserable; and notwithstanding all this, his wisdom does not see fit to alter this constitution of things, for reasons which are unknown and unsearchable to us, and which will perhaps continue to be a secret until the great day of judgment. Till that time comes we can but form probable conjectures*. But that great day shall reveal all

* Suppose the great God had placed a man and woman in a certain inaccessible island, wherein there were herbs and roots of many kinds, but no sort of fruit, grain or corn in it: And suppose he had given them a sufficiency of fruits and corn to support them for a year or two, and more, with a special command to sow some of it, and plant immediately for the support of themselves and their posterity hereafter; and assured them also they should have many children. If this man and woman should eat up all their corn and fruit entirely, even that which they should have sown or planted for their future support; then they and their children in all following years would have been hard put to it to live upon coarse roots dug out of the ground, a poor and scanty supply, and that with much toil and labour: Now would it have been unjust with God to have left them and their children to their constant hard labour and hard fare, without giving them any new corn or fruit to plant or sow, or without providing better food for them? And suppose their children also neglected to cultivate and multiply the best roots they could find, and several of them in every age fell into diseases and died by the badness or scarcity of their provisions, would the

the transactions of God with men, and set them in a gl
light, to the just vindication of all his own perfections, a
silence of all our cavils. But observe, there are these thre
siderations which may serve to alleviate and moderate this
aspect and situation of things at present.

I. All mankind are justly required to adore and worsl
great and glorious Being, whose wisdom and goodness, s
as his power, shine bright in the creation of this world,
the formation of mankind, as well as all other animals wh
upon the earth; they ought to admire and praise him
account, though no reasonable creature can properly give
but for some real benefit.

II. Every man who comes into this world, as cons
our common head and representative *Adam*, in his state o
cence and trial, with full power to obey his Maker's law, an
far superior motives to obedience, hath good reason, e
Adam our father had, to thank God for his existence; for
made in such circumstances, under *Adam* his head, whic
ried in them a much greater probability of standing and
happy, than of falling and being miserable.

III. Though the greatest part of mankind may n
sufficient reason to give thanks to God for their mere ex
in this fallen state, yet all the sons and daughters of *Ada*
reason to praise the divine goodness for many favou
receive, viz. that they are not so miserable as they migl
been by reason of their sins and follies, that they have an
factions or comforts in life, and any lesser degrees of
sorrow than others sustain, or any relief for their own m
and troubles: And especially if they are born and educat
nation where the light of the gospel shines, they have
reason to acknowledge and bless the distinguishing good
their Creator, who has placed them within the nearer and
reach of happiness, if their own evil inclinations and ob
do not withhold them from seeking after it. And,

Creator lie under an imputation of injustice for continuing their existe
these disadvantages, and thus punishing their original rebellion and t
negligence?

And suppose further, that this solitary and inaccessible island
midst of many other islands in the sea, whose inhabitants are continuall
ed by some revelation or divine messenger of the original state and th
circumstances of this unhappy country, in order to restrain the rest fro
dience to their Maker and Lord in similar instances of any kind; might
say, here is a just and valuable reason for which God should continue t
of rebels under their punishment? This may be applied in some meas
forlorn case of mankind on this globe of earth, when compared with
other planetary worlds, who may be preserved in their duty by being
of our sad circumstances, though we know little of theirs. But as
before, these are but mere conjectural thoughts: It is only God hima
great day of judgment can answer every difficulty, and scatter every
from all his works of providence.

IV. When any of the race of mankind are made sensible of their sins and misery, and by repentance and faith in the grace of God, so far as it is revealed to them, have arrived at any tolerable hopes of their interest in his favour, and their acceptance unto life and happiness in another world, then they are called aloud to bless their divine *Creator*, as well as their *Saviour*, and to give thanks to the God of nature and grace together. And I think there is not one place in scripture where man is required to give thanks to the Lord but on one or other of these accounts which I have here mentioned*.

Upon the whole, the result of things is this, that if any of us cannot upon rational grounds give thanks to God as our Creator for our existence, it is owing merely to our original apostacy from God in and by our first parents; for otherwise God would never have made intelligent creatures, who could not reasonably thank him for making them. And then further I add, if we cannot rationally thank God for our creation here, until we have some hope of his favour and grace hereafter, this should awaken us all with utmost diligence in the midst of our miseries to enquire after the way of salvation, and pursue every appointed duty that is necessary for this end: For then we shall be able to bless God for bringing us into being, and we shall no longer lie under such a sad and dismal reproach of nature, as not to give thanks for our existence to the hand that formed us. Thus far I have endeavoured to to prove, that by the miseries of mankind we may have sufficient evidence that they are in a fallen and degenerate state.

Sect. IV.—*A full Proof of Man's Apostacy by Scripture and Reason, derived from their Sinfulness.*

But after all, if it should be found upon the justest survey and balance of things, that the miseries of human nature considered alone, are not a sufficient and satisfactory evidence of the apostacy and fall of mankind from their Maker's favour, and of some remarkable displeasure of the hand that created them; yet I am well assured that *the early corrupt inclinations, the endless iniquities and crimes of men from their childhood, and that universal propensity to sin which is found among all the inhabitants of our world*, joined with the loads of misery they sustain, are both together an effectual and convincing argument that we are a degenerate and fallen race of creatures. Now that we are such a sort of criminal, guilty, sinful, and degenerate beings, and

* There is no plain text that I can find where mankind is commanded or invited to thank God merely for their existence; and in those places where all nations, or all the earth are called upon to bless the Lord, and give thanks to him, it is still in view of their having the knowledge and grace or salvation of God manifested in them.

wretchedly forsaken of God who made us, or fallen un heavy displeasure even from the beginning of life, will ev appear both from the express witness of scripture concern sinfulness, from the necessity of renewing grace, and fr light of nature surveying the heathen world.

First, there are many represensations in scripture universal degeneracy and corruption that has come upon sons and daughters of Adam, and which have been large ported by many writers who have explained these tex Gen. vi. 5. *Every imagination of the thoughts of the man is only evil continually*; and chapter viii. 21. it is *that it is evil from his youth.* Psal. xiv. 3. *The Lord down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if were any that did understand and seek God: They gone aside; there is none that doth good; no, not one.* vii. 20. *There is not a just man upon the earth who do and sinneth not.* Isa. liii. 6. *All we like sheep hav astray, we have turned every one to his own way.* D wanderings, but all are wanderers. Rom. iii. 10. 12. *none righteous; no, not one: There is none that doth go not one.* Ver. 19. *Every mouth is stopped, and all th become guilty before God.* And ver. 23. *All are falle of the glory of God, because all have sinned**. 2 Cor.

* If St. Paul had not used such strong expressions here, as plainl every individual of mankind, yet his argument requires this sense; wise there would be some who would not want the salvation of Christ; it is his great design to prove, that all men are condemned by the law, in need of this salvation, without any exception at all.

Objection. Some have asserted this law, which requires perfect ol and which condemns the sinner to death, to have been abrogated as soon sinned, and that another covenant, even the covenant of grace was su and introduced, even before the sentence of death was pronoun Adam.

Answer. This objection has been often and effectually refuted; very easy to shew, that the law by which all mankind are bound under nation, can never be said to be abrogated, while it holds men, or bi under guilt and death. "It is that law which now brings indignation a upon every soul that does amiss," Rom. ii. 9. "That law which is writt heart of man by nature," verse 15. "The same law which whosoever one point, is guilty of all," Jam. ii. 10. "That law by which is the k of sin, and by which no flesh shall be justified, for all have broken it," 19, 20, 23. "It is that law which curseth every one who continueth things there required, and from whose curse Christ hath redeemed the G well as the Jews," Gal. iii. 10, 11, 13. This is the original law of worl though all mankind may be said perhaps to be under the covenant of those general proposals of repentance and trust in the divine mercy, w made to fallen men by their own reasonings, or by divine revelation, yet freed from the curse and condemnation of the original broken law, b who have accepted of this covenant of grace by sincere repentance and trust in the mercy of God. Now this is but a very small part of mank there are "few that shall be saved." And till this covenant of grace is cepted, every son and daughter of Adam, of mature years, are condem actual sinners by this law. This law therefore stands in full force against sides sincere penitents, and such as are justified by the gospel.

thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead, is, *spiritually dead in trespasses and sins.* Now can we ose that God would create such a world of beings, that every of them coming out of his own hands in their original purity innocence, should so universally break his law, run into sin spiritual death, and naturally incline to practices which tend efile and destroy themselves, and that without any one ex-ion, if it had not arisen from some *root of bitterness,* some inal iniquity, which diffused itself through all of them from : very birth or entrance into this world? Surely this univer-orruption would incline any person to believe, either that had not given to each of his creatures in their original for-on a full and practical sufficiency to answer the demands of aw, and to preserve themselves from iniquity and guilt, or it was lost in some hand or other. It is a strange and incre-e thing to suppose that every single person among the mil-of mankind should be born innocent and pure, with suffi-t and practical powers of all kinds to fulfil the law of God their duty, and that they should yet, by free and voluntary ce, every one for himself, for near six thousand years toge-, break his holy law, and rebel against him that made them, ere were not some original and universal contagion spread ugh them all at their entrance into life. See Quest. I. Sect. . at the end.

Secondly, I argue the same point from the scriptural doc-e of our recovery by divine grace. Let us consider in what ner the scripture represents the necessity of a great and ne change to be made upon the souls of all men, in order to r recovery from the ruins of their nature, and to obtain the ur and image of God, and future happiness. John iii. 3. *ept a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God:* l in other scriptures it is represented that *they must be born the Spirit,* verses 6, 8. *They must be born of God,* John 3. *They must be created anew in Christ Jesus unto good ks,* Ephes. ii. 10. *They must be quickened, or be raised again m their death in trespasses and sins;* Eph. ii. 5. *They must renewed in their Spirit, or created after the image of God in hteousness and true holiness*; Eph. iv. 23, 24. *They must be onciled to God by Jesus Christ;* 2. Cor. v. 18, 19. *They st be washed from their sins in his blood;* 1 Cor. vi. 11. Rev. 5. *And since all have sinned and come short of the glory of d,* therefore if ever they are saved, they must be *justified ely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, om God has set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his od*; Rom. iii. 23—25. Now can any one suppose that God l made such a world of creatures as have come into being n Adam's time to our's, which have all entered into this

world, pure, holy, and innocent in their original state, and yet that there should not one of them retain his image in holiness, nor be fit for his favour and the blessings of his love, without being *born again*, being *new-created*, being *raised from the dead*, being *redeemed by the blood of his own Son*, and being *washed* in so precious and divine a laver? Do not all these representations make it appear highly reasonable to conclude, that every man is born into this world with some original contagion about him, or under some early degeneracy and guilt, and criminal imputation in the sight of God? is it not a most incredible thing that not one among all the millions of these creatures should be fit to be made partakers of his favour, without such amazing purifications as require the blood of the Son of God, and the almighty operations of his blessed Spirit to redeem, and to new-create them, if they were born in their original purity? Do not all these things effectually teach us that mankind in their present generations even from their birth are not such creatures as God first made them? But without entering into these arguments from scripture, which represent the wretchedness of all mankind; I think we may evidently prove, in the third place,

III. That far the greatest part of the world are born under some sort of degenerate and guilty circumstances by a mere survey of the heathen nations with the eye of reason, and by the light of nature.

A few days ago I was taking a view of the map of the world, and measuring with my eye the breadth and extent of the nations. I took a spreading survey of the vast Asiatic empires of Tartary and China, and a great part of the kingdom of Mogul, with the multitude of islands in the East Indies; I went on to survey the large brutal countries of all the southern part of Africa, with the savage nations of the American world. I observed the thousands or rather millions of mankind who dwell on this globe, and walk and trifle, and live and die there under the heaviest cloud of ignorance and darkness, who know not the true God, nor the way to his favour, who are drenched in gross impieties and superstitions, who are continually guilty of national immoralities, and practise idolatry, malice and lewdness, fraud and falsehood, with scarce any regret or restraint. Then sighing within myself, I said, It is not many years since these were all infants, wretched helpless infants, without any knowledge of the things of God or man. The inhabitants of whole regions have been born and brought up under parents who know not the true God, nor are acquainted with the path that leads to life and happiness. Are not these unhappy children, said I, formed and born under difficulties almost unsurmountable? Are they not laid almost under a moral impossibility of

eaking their way of themselves, through so much darkness nd error, to the knowledge, the fear, and the love of him who ade them? Dreadful truth indeed; but so far as I can see, it eems to be certain and uncontestable! Such, I fear, is the case f those of the human race, who at present cover a great part of his earthly globe, with very few exceptions.

Then I ran back in my thoughts four or five thousand years, nd said within myself, what multitudes in every age of the orld have been born in these deplorable circumstances in the nidst of idolatry and profaneness, sin and death? They are nured from their birth to barbarous customs and impious practices: They have an image of the life of brutes and devils wrought n them by their early education: They have had the seeds of nany immoralities and wretched wickedness sown and planted, nd cultivated in them by the rude and savage instructions of hose who went before them; and their own imitation of such orrible examples has confirmed this mischief long before they new or heard of the being of the true God, or the discoveries f his will, or their duty: And perhaps they have never heard it o this day. Scarce any of them have admitted of one thoughtul enquiry, whether they follow the rules of reason, or whether hey are in the way of happiness and peace, any more than their arents before them; and as they are born in this gross darkness, hey grow up through all the stages of life to practise these vile dolatries, and all the shameful abominations of their country, nd they go on to death in the same course: Nor have they ight enough from without to make them plainly see their own olly and danger, nor have they had any probable workings of udgment or conscience within them strong enough to awaken hem effectually to ask, *Is there not a lie in my right hand?* Am not in the way of sin and destruction? Then after a length f years in such impieties and madness, such ignorance of the rue God and universal wickedness, they are plunged into the nvisible world at death, without any evident or reasonable hope f divine favour in the other world, or at least at the utmost peril f his displeasure, and a dark and dismal uncertainty of the cirumstances of that state into which they are delivered at the hour f death or the resurrection.

St. Paul confirms all that I have said, who, by his long and requent visits and sojournings among the heathen nations, well new their temper and state, and he represents them to us as a ost abominable herd of creatures, in several of his epistles; Rom. i. 21—31. Even the wise and the learned among them, he Greeks and the Romans *changed the glory of the incorruptible God into the image of birds, beasts, and creeping things, and worshipped the creature more than the Creator. Their foolish heart was hardened:* They were justly abandoned of God, and

given up to work all uncleanness with greediness: They were filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, malice, &c. They were back-biters, haters of God, without understanding, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful. In Eph. iv. 18. *They were alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their hearts.* In Colos. i. 21, *They were alienated from God, and enemies in their minds by wicked works.* It is true, we are told that there was so much of *the law of God written in their hearts, that their consciences bore witness to it,* in some instances, *and their thoughts excused or accused them;* Rom. ii. 14, 15. But we seldom read of the return of any of them to sincere repentance of their wickedness, by the reproofs of conscience. St. John tells his disciples, that *though they are of God, yet the whole world lies in wickedness;* 1 John v. 19. And St. Paul again assures us, *that those who have sinned without any express knowledge or revelation of a law, shall perish without law.* Doubtless their consciences, in the great day of judgment, will accuse them abundantly and join with the sentence of God the judge in condemning them, and will hardly be able to make just excuses for any of them; and therefore they are represented *as without God, without Christ, and without hope in the world.* Eph. ii. 12. A dismal and deplorable state!

St. Peter says indeed, *that God is no respecter of persons,* that is, whether Jews or Gentiles: *but, in every nation he that feareth God, and worketh righteousness, shall be accepted of him;* Acts x. 34, 35. But if there were very few among the Jews, who feared God, and wrought righteousness, very *few that shall be saved,* as our Saviour saith; Mat. vii. 14. If there are very few in these learned nations of the Gentiles, that feared God or loved him, how much fewer may we suppose to find in the more barbarous countries, which have no knowledge of God nor godliness*? What kind and gracious allowances the blessed God will make at last for such unhappy creatures, he has not revealed to us in his word.

Now, upon this survey of things, I cannot but enquire, would this have been the case of mankind in these wide and unhappy nations? Would these have been the wretched circumstances both of their young offspring and their advancing years, in a hundred long successions, if they had been such a race of

* Though the case stands thus with the heathen world, yet there are, and there must be some grounds of a sufficient vindication of the equity and goodness of God, notwithstanding these scenes of wickedness and destruction among men. This has been made to appear in some measure, by several writers, and particularly in the third and fourth conferences of a book, entitled, "The Strength and Weakness of Human Reason." And what the reasonings of men cannot fully solve and vindicate now, the great God will explain hereafter, and maintain the equity of his own conduct, to the conviction of all his intelligent creatures, men and angels. Amen.

creatures as they came out of the hand of their Creator, harmless and innocent? If the children had been esteemed, in the eye of God, as such undefiled, holy, and guiltless beings as some men are ready to imagine, could this have been their portion? In short, can we suppose, that the wise and righteous, and merciful Creator of the world, would have established and continued such a constitution for the propagation of mankind, which should naturally have led so many millions of them so early into such dismal circumstances and temptations of almost unaviodable iniquity? Or would the blessed God have ever thus treated whole nations of infants, who are the work of his hands, if there had not been some dreadful and universal degeneracy spread over them and their fathers, by some original crime, and which even met and seized them at their entrance into moral life, according to some just and ancient constitution? And what constitution can this be, but the original covenant with *Adam* in innocence, and the spreading consequences of his sin? But as I have insisted upon several of these things at large, under some of the first questions in this treatise, I chuse not to repeat them here; but I will only stay to answer three or four general objections.

Objection I. It is a most unreasonable and unrighteous thing, to impute the sin of one person to another, and to make the children and posterity of a sinner suffer any of the punishments which were due to the father's sin; therefore the righteous and holy God has never appointed any such constitution, nor can he do it.

Answer. It is evident that death was the punishment threatened to man for sin, while he stood in innocence, to deter him from it: It is evident again from other scriptures, *that death is the* actual *wages* or punishment *of sin:* It is plain also from universal experience, that *death passes upon all men*, even upon children, and a thousand other miseries of life attend them; and it is granted by many of those writers who oppose our doctrine, that these miseries and death come upon children by the means of the sin of their first father. Now I could never yet learn any fair and justifiable account, how such sickness and pain, misery and death should come upon all mankind by means of the sin of *Adam*, if it be not in some sense imputed to them, even in the sense in which I have explained it in the *second essay*. Let those writers give a fair and rational account, how this can come to pass but by such a constitution as I have represented. It is not enough to say, that the just and righteous God appointed or even permitted it, in order to bring about greater glory to himself, and greater blessedness to mankind by the gospel of *Christ*, unless every one of those who suffer on the account of *Adam's* sin are made partakers of this greater blessedness, the contrary whereof is sufficiently evident.

Objection II. The common doctrine of original sin inherent, which supposes every man and woman to be born with sinful qualities, vilifies and pours great contempt on human nature, &c. If we act upon this principle, we shall rather hate than love one another.

Answer I. A depression of human nature under a due and deep sense of such universal sin and misery, is the first step towards our recovery by the grace of God and the gospel. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for their's is the kingdom of heaven*, or the blessedness of the gospel; Mat. v. 3. There were many who professed christianity in *Laodicia, knew not that they were wretched and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked*, therefore they did not seriously apply to *Christ* to be made partakers of his blessings; Rev. iii. 17. *It is from a knowledge of our sin and misery by the law, that we come to seek after the salvation of grace*; Rom. iii. 19, 24. And I am persuaded that it is the pride and self-sufficiency of men not acknowledging their folly wretchedness and ruin, that is one of the chief hindrances to the acceptance of the grace of *Christ*.——II. It is yet more unreasonable to suppose, that the acknowledgment of this universal wretchedness of mankind should incline us to hate one another; are we not rather led hereby to pity each other under our common frailties and miseries? And is not this pity the first proper expression of love to the miserable?

Objection III. There can be no man born with principles of sin or sinful qualities, unless God be made the author of sin, because God who makes the nature of every man, makes all his qualities also. Nor could such a constitution of nature be a righteous constitution, which continues the propagation of every child with sinful principles in him, for it is the same thing as if God infused sin into them, and therefore there is no such constitution. Answer, Hath not a wise and good God, considered as Creator, ordained such a constitution of nature, whereby the most monstrous births are brought into the world by sinful mixtures, if mankind abuse themselves with brutes? And may not the great God be good and wise even in this constitution? Cannot a God of equity and goodness appoint such a course of nature among fallen mankind, whereby a drunkard or a lewd person may produce a child bearing the vicious qualities of the parent, or the miserable effects of the parent's sins? And yet the order of nature may be wise and righteous. Is not madness propagated through whole families, and sometimes in several successions, by the fixed constitution of the God of nature, without God's own infusing madness into the brain or blood? Has not God appointed a seed to bring forth a plant? But if the seed be any way corrupted, it may by the divine appointment of the course of nature bring forth a corrupt tree. Is it God that infuses all these evil

and corrupt qualities into men or plants, because his appointed order of nature, or his sovereign interposing will, does not hinder and prevent them? It is a very needless thing to tell us that known truth, that *the course of nature separate from the agency of God, is no cause, or is nothing*; for this piece of instruction in metaphysical science, abates not the force of my argument.

Objection IV. The notion of deriving a sinful nature from *Adam*, runs foul upon this rock, that God doth not make or create the nature of every man who cometh into the world, because God cannot make a thing that is sinful? Answer, suppose, God is constantly producing by the sun, air, and rain, the harvest of the field according to his great law of vegetation; but if some person should sprinkle the seed-corn with a poisonous juice which might infect every grain, the seed might produce corn of a mortal quality. Now if it be asked, Did God make this harvest of corn? The answer is, yes: But did he make this corn poisonous? No, by no means. Now in these conceptions there is no difficulty or danger of mistake. But if men have a mind to be captious, they may spend whole pages in cavilling. The plain case is this, God the Creator makes the nature of every man by his original and almighty order of creation or propagation: But it was *Adam* brought sin into the nature, and made it sinful. There are some other objections which have been raised against this doctrine, viz. *If original sin be natural, it is unavoidable, then it is necessary, then it cannot be culpable, &c.* But all of this kind, with many others, are sufficiently answered, not only in the *late vindication of the scripture doctrine of original sin*, but in many smaller papers which Mr. Hebden, of Suffolk, has lately published on this occasion, as well as in many other excellent writers ancient and modern. Yet it is evident that some of the opposers of truth find it a more easy and a more pleasant thing to repeat with assurance what they have said themselves, than to take due notice of what their fathers, or their neighbours have answered.

SECOND ESSAY.

A Plain Explication of the Doctrine of Imputed Sin and Imputed Righteousness.

THE doctrine of the imputation of sin and righteousness hath been attended with many noisy controversies in the christian world; And though these things may be frequently met with in common life, and that without any controversy, yet they seem to have created such difficulties in religion, as are hard to be compromised. Let us make one more attempt and try, whether these notions and expressions may not be set in so fair and easy a light, by tracing out the plainest ideas of them in the common affairs of mankind, that when they are applied to religious subjects and texts of scripture, it may vanquish these difficulties, and reconcile the sentiments of several contesting parties in christianity.

When a man has broken any of the laws of his country, and is actually fined or imprisoned, or put to public shame or death, or is condemned to fines or imprisonments, to the pillory or the gallows, it is plain that *sin is imputed to him, his wickedness is upon him, and he bears his iniquity*; that is, he is accounted or reputed a criminal by the court of justice, and he is condemned or dealt with as an offender, he is made liable to, or obliged to bear the punishment, or he is actually punished. On the other hand, if a righteous or innocent man is falsely accused of any crime, and he is acquitted by the court, then *sin is not imputed to him* by that court, or he is not condemned, *but righteousness is imputed to him*, or he is reputed and pronounced righteous, and dealt with as an innocent or as a righteous man; or, in another scripture phrase, *his righteousness is upon him.* Or if a reward be either assigned or actually given to a man according to the law upon the account of any righteous or good action he has done, this act of virtue or goodness *is imputed to him, and his righteousness is upon him*, he is dealt with as a righteous and deserving person, *the reward of righteousness* is given him.

If a man has been guilty of a crime which deserves capital punishment, but the punishment is remitted by the mercy of the prince upon his repentance, at the intercession of some nobleman, and he is entirely pardoned, then *sin is not imputed to him*, he is justified from that crime, and *righteousness is imputed to him* by the free favour of the prince, that is, he is not condemned but absolved; he is not liable to punishment now, but he has a right

to impunity and life, or he is dealt with as a righteous person, or as though he had not transgressed. Or suppose a man has been guilty of treason, and his estate is taken away from him, and from his children for ever, then *the sin of the father is not imputed to the father only, but to the children also, that is, they bear the iniquity of their father, his punishment is laid upon them*, they suffer for their father's sin or crime, and that in their following generations even to late posterity, they are exposed to poverty and hardships for the treason of their ancestor, and his sin is imputed to them as well as to him.

If the crime of which a man is guilty be murder of the innocent, and the criminal forfeits his life and estate by the sentence of the law, and his children become beggars and vagabonds, then the blood of the innocent man is said to be upon the murderer, and upon his children, because they also suffer for their father's crime. When the Jews imprecate the guilt of the blood of Christ which they shed, to be imputed to them, and punished on them and their children, this is their language; Mat. xxvii. 25. *His blood be on us and on our children.* Or if we should suppose some criminal to have incurred the penalty of imprisonment, banishment, or scourging, and the laws of the state should permit a friend of his to become his surety, and to suffer these penalties in his room, then the crime is said to *be imputed to the surety, or to be laid upon him, he bears the iniquity* of the criminal, he stands liable to the penalty, and actually suffers for the sin of another man: And thus the crime is not imputed to the original offender, but upon his submission to his prince, and trusting in his mercy, he is entirely acquitted, and dealt with as an innocent or righteous man: then righteousness is imputed to him, though his crime was imputed to his kind surety, when he suffered for it; and the sufferings of the surety are imputed to the criminal, when he is absolved or acquitted on that account.

And if we should suppose the prince, or the laws of the land, to permit this kind friend or surety to exert himself in some eminent act of obedience or service to which a reward is promised; and all this to procure some further favour for the criminal, and to entitle him to the promised reward, then this act of eminent service may be said to be imputed to the original criminal, that is, he is rewarded on the account of it: so that upon the whole, the criminal comes to have not only a freedom from guilt, and a right to impunity, but a right also to the reward, in virtue of what his kind friend and surety has suffered and done for him. The criminal is both pardoned, justified and rewarded for the sake of what his friend has done or suffered, and his friend's doings as well as his sufferings may be said to be imputed to him. Or if any man practise obedience and right-

eousness in an eminent or illustrious manner, and he together with his posterity are dignified and rewarded on the account of that eminent obedience, then this obedience and righteousness of the father *is imputed to the children, his righteousness is upon them;* that is, they are dignified and dealt with as though they had been eminently righteous and obedient, upon the account of what their father was and did.

Now, if among the histories of the nations we have any transactions of this kind recorded by ancient writers, do we not easily understand what these writers say? Is not their meaning very plain and intelligible? Should we stand debating with long chichanery and cavilling, by rules of grammar, logic and politics, whether such things were possible or no? Is not the sense easy to a common reader? Then why should we think these same sort of things and phrases, in matters of religion, are so dark, and so difficult, as to need huge comments and quarrelsome folios to explain them? Why should we not agree in the plain meaning of them, when we meet with any such phrases among the sacred writers? And when we find such representations made to us in the things that relate to God and man, sin and righteousness, in the books that teach us the way to salvation, why should we not receive them in their plain common sense, without contending about them?

The chief difficulty in adjusting our common ideas in any of these cases seems to me to be this: How can the particular acts of the treason of the parent be imputed to a child, especially in its infancy, though it is granted that he suffers banishment and poverty for the sake of his father's treason; I say, How can these particular criminal actions be imputed to him, since this infant was never capable of committing these acts of treason, they being quite out of the reach of a child, and impossible for him to commit? Or how can those eminent and illustrious acts of obedience or righteousness which were performed by a father, be imputed to a child, if that child never stood either under a direct obligation, nor had any capacity to perform those very actions and services? To these enquiries, I make these two plain answers:

I. Those acts of treason, or acts of service, by very plain and common forms and figures of speech, are said to be imputed to the children, or to be upon them, when they suffer or enjoy the obvious and legal consequences of their father's treasons, or of their eminent services taken in the gross and comprehensive view of them, as they are criminal or meritorious; though the particular actions and circumstances of those treasons, or of those services, could never have been practised by the children, at least in their minority. This would give no difficulty at all to the reader, who should peruse these human histories, and read

uch narratives in them; and why should it give us any difficulty when we read this divine account of things in the holy writings, or in human discourses on divine subjects?

I answer also in the second place, The words sin and righteousness may be taken in common authors, as I shall shew presently they are often taken in scripture, in these two senses: Sin or iniquity signifies either the particular acts of disobedience to a law, or it signifies the *legal result* of those disobedient acts, that is, the guilt or the liableness to condemnation, and obligation to bear punishment which arises from those acts of disobedience according to the law. And thus when we say the sin or iniquity of the father is imputed to the children of a traitor, who never were nor could be precisely in their father's situation or circumstances, we do not mean that every single evil act of the father is charged upon the child, as if the child had done it; but that the guilt or liableness to punishment which arises from those acts of the father is so far transferred or imputed to the child, that the child suffers banishment or poverty for the sake of it: and this according to the law and custom of nations is esteemed just and righteous. In like manner righteousness has two senses: It either signifies the particular acts of obedience to any law or command of a superior, or it signifies the result of those actions, that is, a right to impunity, a freedom from punishment, and a right to life, or liberty, or honour, or any reward which belonged by the law to such acts of obedience.

And so when we say *the righteousness of the father is imputed to the child of a person* who has performed some eminent act of service or obedience, we do not mean that all those special acts and circumstances of the father's service or obedience are minutely and particularly imputed to the child; but the general result of those acts, that is, the rectitude in court, or the right to impunity and reward, which is the result of the father's performances, is imputed to the child. Now if we would but try to explain every text of scripture wherein either imputed sin or imputed righteousness are mentioned in the word of God, either in express words, or in the plain sense and meaning of them, I am persuaded we should find them all easy and intelligible, and free from cavils and controversies.

If we meet with such narratives in common history as I have suggested, surely we should not expect that the writer should express himself in such a nice accuracy of learned and scholastic language, as men of modern controversy are almost constrained to use, in order to guard their expressions against all possible cavil and objection. Nor should we enter such a detail of critical and perplexing debates about every punctilio both of word and sense in this history, as is too often done when we read these things in scripture, as relating to Adam and Christ. And since

the holy scriptures were written for the common use of mankind, and their general meaning is obvious and plain, why should we rack every syllable, and put every expression to the torture to make it confess what we have a mind to have it speak according to the different parties under which we list ourselves.

If we consider that account which scripture gives us of *all mankind falling under sin*, and the legal or penal consequences thereof *by the sin of Adam*; or if we consider *Christ's taking upon him the sins of men, bearing their sins, and suffering for them as a surety or sacrifice*; *or if we consider righteousness imputed to those that believe, or even the righteousness or obedience of Christ imputed to penitents and believers*; I think we should find no great difficulty to adjust our ideas of these things, if we would but suffer ourselves to form our sentiments of these matters by the plain, natural and common expressions and ideas of men about these subjects, and in a candid manner receive the obvious meaning of such language. In order to confirm what I have said, I desire to make these three remarks:

I. That there are several such histories in the bible, wherein instances of the like kinds among the transactions of men are delivered down to us in such sort of expressions or words of the same import. Abraham's eminent obedience to God in bringing his son Isaac to the altar, was rewarded, not only in blessings to Abraham himself, but to his seed. Gen. xxii. 16—18. *Thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice.* Here it may be said, that Abraham's obedience, at least in the result and consequences of it, is imputed to his seed. This same promise is repeated again to Isaac, and assigned to his posterity, for the sake of Abraham's eminent piety and obedience. Gen. xxvi. 4, 5. *I will perform the oath that I sware unto Abraham thy father, and I will make thy seed to multiply as the stars of heaven, and I will give unto thy seed, all these countries, because that Abraham obeyed my voice, and kept my charge, my statutes and my laws.* Abraham's righteousness was thus imputed to Isaac and his seed.

Phinehas the son of Eleazar was zealous for the Lord among the children of Israel, and God gave him and his seed after him the covenant of an everlasting priesthood, because he was zealous for his God, and slew the criminals in Israel; Numb. xxv. 11. This eminent act of righteousness was so far imputed to his children, as that they received the reward of it as well as himself. *Achan who had stolen the silver and the rich garment and the wedge of gold from among the spoils of Jericho*, provoked the Lord to anger; and his crime, by the appointment of God, was so far imputed to *his children, that they were all stoned* for the sake of his crime. The guilt or punishment of it was im-

ed to the children together with the father; Josh. vii. 24. e falsehood and covetousness of Gehazi were imputed to his terity; 2 Kings v. 25. When God by the mouth of his pro- t pronounced *that leprosy should cleave unto him, and to his l for ever.*

Many other instances of this kind might be collected from sacred writings, to shew us how persons may not only have ir own sin, or their own righteousness imputed to them in the nishments or the rewards they receive; but other persons also y have that sin or righteousness imputed to them; that is, they y fall under condemnation and punishment, or have a right to punity and reward by a wise and holy constitution of God, on the account of the crime or obedience of their forefathers. ote, It is not my business and design in this place to justify at ge the conduct of providence in these instances, but only to present the actual facts or matter of history, and show how ry easy and intelligible these sort of representations are, and at they would afford no difficulty to a reader, nor occasion any atroversy about the sense of them, if we came with honest nds to read them, and not under any former prejudices or bias.

II. It is pretty evident that the scriptures of the old and w testament use the words *sin and iniquity*, חטא or חטאה and עון d Ἁμαρτια both in the Hebrew and Greek languages, to sig- fy not only the criminal actions themselves, but also sometimes ey signify the legal result and consequences of these actions, at is, the guilt or liableness to punishment, and sometimes the nishment itself, whether it fall upon the original criminal, or on others for his sake, and on his account. In the same man- r the scripture uses the word righteousness, צדק or צדקה and ικαιοσυνη, to signify, that right to impunity, that rectitude in art, that justification, or being pronounced righteous, or that ght to reward, which is the result of those particular acts of ety and obedience, as well as to signify the particular acts of edience or piety themselves. If this has not been sufficiently ewn already by writers in this controversy, a moderate study some of those texts where these words are used, will convince of it.

I might give a short specimen of it in a few scriptures. ob xxxiii. 26. *God will render to a man his righteousness*, that not the very righteous actions, but the proper result of them, those blessings which are the fruits of righteousness. Psal. xiv. 5. *He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and right- usness from the God of his salvation*, that is, the reward of ghteousness. Hosea x. 12. *Sow to yourselves in righteousness*, at is, in and by actions of piety and goodness; *till the Lord me, and rain righteousness upon you*, that is, till he pour own on you the rewards or fruits of piety.

I might add here, that in several places of St. Paul's e tles, the word *righteousness* is used to signify justification in passive sense of the word, or a justified state, a rectitud court, or a right to impunity and life. Rom. x. 3. *Christ is end of the law for righteousness to every one that believe* which must mean that Christ is the great design or accompli ment of the law of God, in order to the justification of lievers, or to their obtaining a right to life. Rom. x. 19. *W the heart man believeth unto righteousness*, that is, to obtain j tification, or a justified state. Gal. ii. 23. *If righteousness c by the law, then Christ is dead in vain*; that is, if a justi state, or a right to life came by the law &c. And particul where the word λογιζομαι, or *impute*, is joined with *righte ness*, as Rom. iv. 3. Gal. iii. 6. *Abraham believed God, an was counted or imputed to him for righteousness*; Rom. iv *His faith is counted for righteousness*; it is not αντι or υπερ, is, for and instead of righteous works, but εις δικαιοσυνην, th in order to justification, or acceptance with God.

And so in other places of scripture, work whether goo evil, is put for the reward of it. Job xxxiv. 11. *The work man will he render unto him*; that is, the recompence or fru his work: So the word *iniquity* is used to signify the punisht of it. Hos. xii. 13. *Ye have plowed wickedness, ye have re iniquity*; that is, the punishment that it deserves. So desires Philemon *to impute any wrong he had received Onesimus to himself*; Philem. ver. 18. Not the evil ac but the damage he sustained.

And upon this account when sin or righteousness are to be imputed to any man upon the account of the works of ri eousness or sin which he himself has done; then these w perhaps may sometimes denote the good or evil actions t selves, together with the legal result of them in guilt and demnation, or the legal rectitude in absolution and justifica But when the sinful or righteous actions of one person a imputed to another as to bring punishments or rewards upo other, then generally the words *imputed sin and righteou* signify the legal and forensic result of these sinful or right actions, that is, an obligation or a liableness to punishme one side, or a right to impunity, and the reward on the o It may be granted indeed, if one man commit murder, and t or four other men contrived or encouraged, aided or abetted murderer in the commission of the crime, perhaps the actio murder, as well as the legal penalties of it, may be in a s imputed to all these men, because they are all actual sharer the fact: But this is not the case in these scriptural imputati we are speaking of, therefore it is only guilt or penalty that imputed or transferred. Some person may be ready to enqui

low can the guilt of sin or the condemnation for it uted or transferred from one man to another, with- ation of the sinful actions themselves; Or how can tude, that is, the right to impunity and life, or the of one be imputed to another, without the righte- emselves being imputed; To this I answer, The it constitution or law, whether human or divine, by tions themselves, whether good or evil, could be e imputed, is sufficient for the imputation of the of those actions, and that with as much justice. add, with much more justice in many cases, may ilt or punishment of sinful actions be imputed to sferred to them than the actions themselves: For of the evil actions to an innocent person, if it would carry more of crime and blame, and shame, al defilement and demerit in it, than the mere im- ir guilt, that is, a liableness to condemnation and And indeed when the punishment is transferred to e sin or guilt is said to be imputed to them, as I fore.

It will be objected, may not the very same sinful father be imputed to the posterity, since the child- father naturally when he committed those sins? *d to pay tithes in Abraham,* Heb. vii. 9. *because he loins of his great grandfather, when he paid isedec?*

The apostle expresses it not as a matter of strict ause he adds the words, *as I may say so,* to inti- er an allusion or emblem, than strict reasoning.

e could be supposed any advantage by this natural men in *Adam* to support the imputation of his sin ere can be no necessity of it, for *Christ* was not though *our sins were imputed to him.* This im- therefore to the one or the other signifies only the guilt, condemnation or punishment, and not the the same evil actions, or the transferring them us, or from us to our blessed Saviour.

A third argument to prove the good or evil actions uted, as some suppose, may arise from the strong scripture, especially in Rom. v. 19. where there a comparison between our being made or "con- s by the disobedience of Adam, and our being tuted righteous by the obedience of Christ." To that the Jewish and all the Eastern writers deal igures and expressions to signify plain and obvious erefore there is some allowance to be made in the *hem, or when* we reduce them to plain language.

And besides, as *Adam* was the head and spring not only of our guilt and death by imputation, but of our inherent sin by natural propagation also; so *Christ* was the head and spring not only of our justification and life by his imputed righteousness, but of our inherent holiness or righteousness by sanctification: And perhaps the strength of the expressions might be used to intimate all this to us.

But if only the result of their good or evil actions were imputed to us, those strong expressions might be used. I am sure when "all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions in all their sins, are confessed over the head of the goat, while Aaron lays both his hands upon it, and he is said to put or transfer them all upon the head of the goat, and that the goat should bear upon him all their iniquities into the wilderness, or a land of separation;" Lev. xvi. 21. All these words can signify nothing more than transferring to the goat the guilt or condemnation or liableness to punishment, misery and death, which these sins deserved, and to which the goat might be exposed; for a brute creature cannot have human sins any otherwise imputed or transferred to it: the particular sinful actions of man cannot be transferred to the brutal sacrifice in any other sense: Nor do I see a necessity of any other sense in which the sin of *Adam* was imputed to his posterity, or the sins of men to the Son of God*. If one would keep our ideas of these things as clear and distinct as possible, I think we may do it by virtue of this distinction, or this two-fold sense of the words sin and righteousness.

Fourthly, It is possible some may in the fourth place object that it cannot properly be called imputed righteousness, if the righteous actions themselves are not imputed; for in proper speech the result of *Christ's* righteousness, that is, the right to impunity and eternal life which he procured for us, is given to us rather than imputed. Answer. To this I answer and grant, that this is the very language of scripture: It is called, *the gift of righteousness*; Rom. v. 17. *and eternal life*, which is the result of *Christ's* righteousness, *is the gift of God through Jesus Christ*; Rom. vi. 23. *And the forgiveness of sins is given to Israel*; Acts v. 31. Yet let it be observed also, that the very reward itself is sometimes said to be reckoned or im-

* Let what will be said to confine the sense of this imputation of sin or righteousness to the legal or forensic result of good or evil actions; let what will be said to exclude and deny the imputation of the actions themselves to others; yet those who oppose this doctrine will and do level almost all their arguments against the imputation of the actions themselves, and then triumph in having demolished what we never built, and in refuting what we never asserted or maintained. Nor do I know any other reason for this their conduct, but that while they put such senses upon our words as we disclaim, they can glory in their own fancied victories; but where the truth or integrity of it lies, I know not.

ted in scripture. Rom. iv. 4. The word is λογιζεται, which our lslators have construed *imputed* in the next verse. But this ds me to the next remark.

III. The scripture does not, as I remember, any where in press words assert, " that the sin of Adam is imputed to his ldren, or that the sins of mankind, or of believers were imted to Christ, or that the righteousness of Christ is imputed believers;" yet still I think the sense and true meaning of all se expressions is sufficiently found in several places of ipture.

If we consult the language of the prophets *Isaiah*, and *remy*, and *Daniel*, and the apostles *John*, and *Paul*, and *eter*, in their representation of some of these subjects, Isa. i. 4—12. and Jer. xxiii. 6. and xxxiii. 16. Dan. ix. 24. Rom. 12—19. 1 Cor. xv. 3, 21, 22. Gal. iii. 13. 2 Cor. v. 21. phes. i. 7. and ii. 5, 13. Phil. iii. 9. Col. i. 14, 20. Heb. ix. l, 26. 1 Pet. ii. 24. and iii. 18. 1 John i. 7. and ii. 2. and iv.). and Rev. i. 5. and v. 9. and many other scriptures, we shall id the substance and true sense of these phrases as I have exained them. Yet since these express words and phrases of the imputation of Adam's sin to us, of our sins to Christ, or of hrist's righteousness to us," are not plainly written in scripture, e should not impose these very expressions on every christian; t every one take their liberty in manifesting their sense of these ain scriptural doctrines in such words and phrases of their own, are modest and secure from offence and danger, or confine iemselves to scripture-language. But if these words were exressly written in the bible, they could not reasonably be interreted to any other sense, than that which I have explained in id by so many examples, both in the scripture-history and in ommon life. Let us make this appear in a few instances.

When we say, *the sin of Adam is imputed to all his posrity*, can we possibly mean that every evil motion of *Adam's* re or his heart towards the forbidden fruit, with every thought unbelief of the threatening, or every working of ingratitude ward God in his mind, or pride in his heart, together with the ction of eating this fruit at his wife's request, is minutely and articularly imputed to all his infant seed? Can these criminal ioughts be imputed to them who never were under any temptaon or capacity of tasting that fruit, or of breaking that particuir law of God? Must we not necessarily therefore mean, that it the guilt of *Adam* in that sin, or his liableness to condemnaion and punishment, to misery and death, is imputed or transrred to his posterity? *Imputation of sin* in this case signifies e *imputation or transferring of the legal or penal consequences f sin; that is,* misery and death.

When the sins of David, and of Mary Magdalen, and

Rahab, and of all the adulterers, the harlots, and the murderers that ever repented and believed on Christ, are said in general to be imputed to Christ, is it proper to explain it by saying all the particular lustful thoughts, with every adulterous wish, and every impious and bloody purpose in their hearts, together with all the lewd and vile actions both of men and women, are in themselves imputed, reckoned, or transferred to the pure and holy Jesus, when he was made a sacrifice for their sins? Can Christ be counted or reputed as the lewd or bloody transgressor? Can any thing else therefore be meant by such an expression of Magdalen's, or of David's sins imputed to Christ, than that the guilt or liableness to punishment, which is the legal result of their crimes, was laid upon Christ when he *bore all their sins in his body, on the cursed tree?*

Let it be considered, that if all their sinful actions could be and were imputed to Christ, which are only and properly personal, I cannot well see how to avoid the imputation of the vitiosity and sinfulness and dreadful demerit of all these actions to Christ, together with the actions themselves, and thus the defilement of their sins in every bad sense of it, will be transferred and imputed to the blessed Jesus, the holy one of God, which I fear would too nearly border upon the language of blasphemy. It is evident indeed in many places of scripture, that our "sins were imputed to our blessed Saviour, when Christ bore the sins of many, when he was made sin for us;" that is, a sin-offering, when "the Lord laid on him the iniquities of us all," when "the Lord pleased to bruise him, and put him to grief, and made his soul an offering for sin:" But I think it can never mean any more than this, that he was made a proper sacrifice of atonement or expiation for those sins, by bearing sorrows and punishments, and death upon that account, which were the legal result of our sins, in order to deliver us from them*.

So when we say, *the righteousness of Christ is imputed to believers*, I think it can never mean that every particular righteous action of Christ, as he was a holy observer of the Jewish law, a preacher of the gospel, a master of a family, or a worker of miracles, can be imputed to women or children, who were never called to any such office, or to perform these actions; nor can his sufferings of circumcision, or his celebration of Jewish festivals in the temple, among the males of the house of Israel be minutely and particularly imputed to the Gentile christians, both male and female, who never were under the command of circumcision, or who would have sinned in practising Jewish

* If any one will doubt whether in scripture the sins of one person are ever imputed to another, or borne by another, in the sense declared, let him read even Doctor Whitby himself in his exposition on 1 Pet. ii. 24, 25. where I think any man may find satisfaction in this point, how *Christ bore our sins in his own body on the tree.*

remonies: And therefore *the righteousness of Christ, when it said to be imputed to believers*, can mean no more than that the gal result of his righteous acts, or acts of obedience to God, is nputed to them, or bestowed upon them. This *gift of righteousness* therefore, is a right to impunity, a legal rectitude in the urt of God, an absolution from sin and punishment, a pardon f sin and justification in the sight of God, and a right to eternal fe, which are conferred upon them for the sake of what Christ as done and suffered.

And indeed for this reason I have sometimes scrupled to use is language, though some very good writers have used it, viz. at the merits of Christ, or his satisfaction are imputed to us. he satisfaction of Christ is the recompence which he made to od for our breach of his law: His merit in its most natural nse signifies his proper desert and worthiness of all those divine nours and blessings which were his own personal rewards, as ell as of that pardon of sin and eternal life which he obtained r us. And this merit and satisfaction arises from the transcendt value and dignity of the person of Christ. Surely this satisction cannot be imputed to us properly, lest we should be said have satisfied, and made God a recompence for our sins. His erit cannot be imputed to us in a strict sense, for that would ake us meriters, either of such peculiar glories as he had, or least of our own pardon of sin and eternal life. But if we ak the sense of the word merit so as to mean nothing but those essings of pardon, grace, and eternal life which Christ has erited for us, or rather the legal right of true believers to those essings, according to the covenant of grace; then the phrase his merits imputed, may be used without offence or error. ere let me make these two reflections:

I. It is the explaining this doctrine of imputed sin and nputed righteousness, so as to include all the particular acts of n and righteousness, with their proper merit or demerit, &c. at has tempted so many persons to deny the doctrine itself.

II. If it should be allowed that the very act of Adam's disedience was imputed to all his posterity; if the very same sinl actions of men could be imputed to Christ; if the very actions Christ's obedience and righteousness could be imputed to lievers, what greater punishments could the one justly and reanably suffer? Or what blessings could the other reasonably be itled to, or enjoy, according to scriptural representations of ings, beyond what scripture has assigned, either to mankind as e result of the sin of Adam, or to Christ as the result of the ns of men, or to believers as the result of the righteousness of hrist?

Upon the whole, I conclude, the imputation of Adam's first n to his offspring, the imputation of our sins to Christ, and

imputation of his righteousness to us, which are so often u
our protestant divines, may be very well understood in a n
ral sense, or a sense much favoured by scripture, accord
the common ideas and notions which people have of one p
suffering for the sins or crimes of another, or one person's
ing special benefits for the good deeds of another, as app
the beginning of this essay, without running into needless
or controversies, into improper language, and dangerous ext
And in general, I may make this just inference: If we
but allow the expressions of scripture, or the plain and o
sense and meaning of those expressions the same cand
interpretation as we allow to all men who write of civil or h
cal subjects in the like cases, and not cavil at them in co
writings, we might sufficiently enter into the sense and m
of God in his word, and find a greater uniformity in our
ments: And we should also abound more in charity an
towards each other, if any lesser difficulties and darkness
remain upon our minds, and should lead us to some differe
opinion and expression about these subjects.

THIRD ESSAY.

:he Guilt and Defilement of Sin, and how far they may be transferred to Others.

order to clear the doctrine of imputed sin from all further :ulties, it may be proper to enter into a disquisition of the sense of those words, viz. *sin, guilt, and defilement,** which 'requently made use of in scripture, and in the common lan- ge of christians: Let us try to clear them from all ambiguity, etting the several distinct senses in which they are used in a picuous light. Sin is the most general name for all manner ioral evil, and in its general or abstract nature, or rather the ilness of it, is *want of conformity to the law of God in the gs which that law requires, or the transgression of that law ose things which it forbids;* and thus it includes both the of omission and sins of commission. Again, Sin is to be idered as it is a principle or habit in the mind, which inclines break the law of God; or as it appears in the actions of which are actual transgressions or violations of this law. further, there are two things to be considered in sin, viz. 'eal and the relative evil of it.

First, The real evil of sin consists in its hurtful nature and qualities, whether it be considered in the habits of the mind, the actions of life. Let us survey them both briefly. The evil of sin is that disorder in the habits, or principles, or ers of the soul, which inclines it to act contrary to the holy re, perfections and image of God, as well as against his law. a disorder also in these very actions, as they are contrary to iature of God, defacing his image, spoiling the soul's original tude, breaking the true order of things, and destroying the it happiness of man†. This disorder in the soul, or its prin- s of action, is called in scripture, *lust, concupiscence, tor- ion, sin that dwells in us, the body of death, the flesh, the*

Though the abstract substantives guilt and defilement are not much used ipture in our translation, yet I presume none will be so weak as to object it my representation of them as scripture-language, since their conjugates rivatives, guilty, guiltiness, guiltless, defile, defiled," &c. are frequently

As virtue and holiness are are the true rectitude and order of the human when all its powers are in proper subjection to God, and harmony with nther; so sin is properly the disorder of it, when the inferior powers of te and affection rebel against the superior and guiding powers of reason onscience, and the will and passions are not kept in their due obedience to vator.

carnal mind, the law of sin, and the law in the members. The same disorder in the actions of life makes them be called *sins, abominations, iniquity, wickedness, evil works or ways, &c.* I add yet further, sin considered as a real evil, and a disorder of heart and life, hath its natural effects and consequences following it, such as pain or anguish of conscience, self-vexation, shame, &c. Secondly, Let us consider the relative evil of sin. This consists more particularly in its respect to the governing authority and law of God; it is a contrariety to the precepts of that law, partly in the very principles and habits of the soul, as well as in the actions of life*. But as this relative evil chiefly belongs to sinful actions, it is more properly an actual opposition to, or violation of God's righteous law, and so it subjects the sinner to the punishment which that law threatens†. The terms *of unrighteousness, disobedience, trespass and transgression* are sometimes applied to this relative evil of sin in the actions of life in scripture, or more properly it is called guilt, or guiltiness before God, and it signifies our liableness to punishment because of sin. As the real evil of sin hath its natural effects and consequences on the sinner: so the punishment which the law threatens may be called the legal consequences of sin, and includes pain, misery, or death, inflicted upon sinners. Again, as the relative evil of sin is removed by pardon through the atonement of Christ, so the real evil of it is removed by sanctification by the Holy Spirit. The first changes our condemned state into reconciliation with God; the last changes our sinful nature and temper into the image of God and holiness.

Perhaps some person may object against this scheme, and say all the evil that is in sin is relative, for the mere natural action abstracted from all its relations hath no real evil in it; therefore this distribution of the relative and real evil of sin is not just and proper. I answer, Sin considered as a bad principle in the soul, or as a bad action in life, is indeed a real evil, for it hath many positive evil qualities and natural evil effects, which all mankind know and feel, and which are too many to be reckoned up; but the abstract idea of sin, or rather the sinfulness of any action, is granted to be relative, because it consists in a want of conformity to the law of God. I grant also that sin may in some sense be called a relative evil, because it bears a contrariety to the image of God, as well as it consists in a contrariety of the law of

* The apostle John describes it thus; John iii. 4. η αμαρτια εστιν η ανομια, *sin is unlawfulness*, which our translators have called the *transgression of the law.*

† I say, the relative evil of sin belongs chiefly to sinful actions, rather than to the habits and principles of sin in the soul, because I take the evil inclinations of the heart prompting us to act contrary to the law of God, and to be part of the real evil of sin: And besides I do not remember the word guilt, which is the *proper relative evil of sin*, is ever in scripture ascribed to the habit or principle *of sin* without the act.

od.. Yet since sin in the heart or in the life, in habit or in act, a real bad quality, and is contrary to the image of God, and turally tends to ruin a soul by destroying its good qualities, its ly rectitude or holiness, its peace and happiness, as well as gally by subjecting it to punishment; I chuse to call that disder which hath such a real and natural tendency to spoil God's age and our happiness, *the real evil of sin*: and I would call demerit or desert of death, or its legal subjection of us to punment, *the relative evil*: And I desire leave to do so at present, at I may not admit confusion into this discourse, and may prent all contention about words.

The general term sin in scripture is frequently used to sigy sometimes the relative, and sometimes the real evil of it. It used promiscuously and indifferently in the Old Testament and the New, both for the sinful disorder of our hearts and lives, d also for the demerit or punishment of some sinful action. It used for the opposition that is in sin to the holy nature of God, d to the soul's real happiness, as well as for the opposition of to the law of God, and its subjecting us to the legal penalty. ow let us consider what is the guilt of sin, and what is its defilent, and distinguish them as far as scripture and common speech mits.

First, we will enquire into the meaning of the guilt of sin; d this will afford us the following observations:

I. The words *guilt and guilty*, in their original and most oper sense denote the relation of a sinful action or person to me law, and the obligation which the sinner lies under to make tisfaction to the law, by suffering some penalty. The English ord is supposed to be derived from the Saxon word *gild* a tax fine; and *gildan* is a person obliged, or liable to make amends, pay for a fault committed. In the learned languages it hath same sense. *Reus and reatus* in latin, and ενοχος and ενοχη in Greek, seem to be entirely confined in their significations to relation or situation in which the sinner stands with regard to law, and represent a person bound to answer for a fault or nsgresssion of the law. So our guilt or guiltiness before God, ginally and properly denotes the relative evil of sin, or its nsgression of the law, and the sinner's obligation to make ends for it by suffering some penalty.

II. It must be granted that the word guilt by some writers been distinguished into these two senses, viz. there is a guilt the fault, which is called *reatus culpæ*, and there is a guilt of punishment, which is usually termed *reatus pœnæ*: And thus term guilt or guiltiness, is applied to a person three ways, metimes it signifies his having done the crime, or the sinful ion, as when we say a man is guilty of blasphemy, that is, he

blasphemed: Sometimes it denotes his his demerit or desert of the punishment threatened, and at other times it means only the legal subjection of a person to punishment thereby; as when we say, the blasphemer is guilty of death, we mean he has deserved it, or at least he is liable to it.

III. Observe also, that by using this word in these three distinct senses, we are led sometimes to mingle and unite all these senses in one; and so in the word guilt we sometimes include some idea of the actual fault or crime, and the personal demerit of the sinner, as well as its legal subjection of him to punishment; yet it is not always used in all these senses, but always in one or other of them.

IV. Observe further, that we never say a man is guilty of the fault, but when he is the actual personal sinner, and has deserved the punishment: But he may be said to bear the guilt of sin, or have the guilt laid on him, when he is made liable or subject to the punishment by the imputation of sin to him, according to any righteous compact or constitution, though he be not the personal or actual sinner, nor has merited punishment himself.

V. When we speak of *the guilt of conscience*, or a guilty conscience, it means that sensible grief, or anguish of soul, which arises from a painful consciousness, or remembrance of our having committed sin against God and his law; and so it includes in it not only the fear and terror of the punishing justice of God which is a legal consequent of sin, but also *the shame* that arises from our having done amiss, and from our unfitness to appear before a God of holiness under that sinful disorder, which is a natural consequent or effect of sin. This guilt of conscience belongs only to the personal offender, and can never be transferred by imputation to another. But in the main, I think we may determine, that this word, the guilt of sin, or of a sinful action, as it was originally designed, so is much more frequently, and more obviously used and understood concerning the legal consequent of that sin, or its just subjection of the sinner to punishment, which is its *relative evil*, than it is concerning the disorder of the sinful action, or *the real evil* of it. And indeed this is the only thing in sin which can be transferred and imputed to any other person, that is, the obligation to suffer the penalty, or to make amends for the violation of the law. In the following part of this discourse therefore, when I use the word *guilt*, I desire to be understood chiefly, or only, concerning that liableness, obligation, or subjection to punishment under which sin may bring any man, whether it be actually and personally committed by himself, or whether it be transferred to him only by imputation. The use of words in different senses, and as including different ideas, has been often an unhappy spring of confusion and mistake, which we

uld avoid as much as we can, by confining words to a partiar sense*.

Now let us consider what is the filth or defilement of sin. e filthiness, pollution, or defilement of sin, which is so frently mentioned in scripture, is not *any third thing* really tinct from the two forementioned evils of sin, viz. the guilt t, and the *disorderly nature* of it, that is, the *relative* and the *l* evil: Defilement is only a metaphor used by the Spirit of God netimes to express one of these, viz. the *legal guilt*, but ch more frequently to signify the other, viz. the *criminal disder*; even as the word *sin* itself is used to denote both the reve and the real evil of it, viz. the legal guilt, and the moral or minal disorder.

The words *defilement* and *pollution*, are mere figures borred from things of the body, and applied to the soul, which spirit, and which in a strict and proper sense cannot be ded: A body is said to be defiled, when it has something of a er nature mingled with it or cast upon it, or when a body is tainted and corrupted, that it becomes offensive to our senses: l this bodily filth many times is removed by passing through water, or through the fire, whereby the body attains its priive purity either in whole or in part. Now because there are

* Here let it be observed, that languages are at first formed by the bulk of kind, who have not any great solicitude to secure the sense of each word, confine it to one proper idea: and when different ideas approach near so another, the same word is often used by them for two or three ideas, especisince mankind hath many more ideas than there are words in any language soever to represent or signify them. And hereby it happens, that ideas run: into one another by so near an approximation, the words that signify them, gh they might be at first different, yet by degrees they run into one another's ning, and bring much confusion into our conception of things. The words , sin, demerit, are instances of this. Let it be added also, that the figurative metaphorical way of speaking is introduced into any language, by endeaing to describe spiritual ideas by some resemblance to sensible and corporeal ge. And though this may give a brightness and force, beauty and sensibility e expression, where the ideas are perfectly known, yet it is too often in danof introducing some mistake and error into the minds of those who afterl heard and read it. The words filth and pollution, &c. will evidence this. If you ask, why this sort of language, with its various defects and dangers of ake, is made use of by the sacred writers in scripture, the answer is obvious: scripture was written for the bulk of mankind, who are not called to enter accuracies and nice punctilios, and therefore it must speak their language, it may be the better understood by them, how imperfect and ambiguous er it may happen to be. And besides, as the use of figures and metaphors ntens and aggrandizes the things they represent, so the holy writers saw it ssary to represent their important ideas in the brightest and strongest images, figures, and sensibilities, to strike the minds of the people with their great rtance. And this was the custom also of eastern writers. Therefore in exing the scriptures, as well as other writings, in a clear and distinct manner, would speak more exactly and accurately concerning things, and guard nst every mistake in a critical and distinct explication of them, we should avour to keep the same ideas to the same words as far as ever we can; and g distinguished the different senses in which a word hath been used, we d confine, as far as *possible*, one word to one meaning, or idea only.

some things in sin which are its proper evils, that bear a resemblance to bodily defilements, therefore the same word is metaphorically applied to the sins of the soul.

But since it is but a metaphor, a figure, or impropriety of speech, it must have something literal and proper which is signified thereby: Now all that I know of, that can be called the proper evil of sin, is either relative or real, and consists either in the guilt or in the disorder of it. I have no idea or conception of any thing, different from these two, when I use the word *defilement* or *pollution*: And we must not abuse ourselves with scripture-metaphors and figurative words, instead of real ideas, nor persuade ourselves into a fancy of more realities than there are or can be in nature. This would be to dishonour scripture instead of explaining of it. If I were to prove that these are the two only ideas in which we find the terms of filthiness, defilement, or pollution, used in scripture, or in our best writers on sacred subjects, I might confirm it these three ways.

I. If we consider the effects which are represented to flow from the defilement of sin, they are all such as may be attributed either to the guilt or to the disorder of it. 1. The holy scripture and our divines represent the filth or defilement of sin, as that which makes us offensive to God, as any corporeal defiled thing is offensive to ourselves. Now it is the guilt of sin that makes us offensive to the divine justice, for that is the attribute that vindicates the honour of his law, and executes the penalty upon those that have broken it, and are become guilty. And it is the disorderly nature of sin, whether in our hearts, or in our actions, that makes us offensive to the divine holiness; for sin in this sense is a contrariety to his holy nature, to all his moral perfections, his complete rectitude, his goodness, and his truth: It is in this sense, *God is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity*; Heb. i. 13. He will not let those come into his presence with approbation, whose hearts or lives are *defiled*, that is, under sinful disorders. This was typified by the levitical pollutions of old, when some bodily defilement excluded the Israelites from the camp, and the tabernacle where God dwelt: He dwelt there in his majesty and justice, and threatened death to defiled persons that came near his altar, to represent his punishment of the guilt of sin; he dwelt there in his holiness, and commanded them to stand at a distance, to shew that the disorderly nature of sin made persons unfit to converse with God. Thus all the ceremonial pollutions of the Jews typified one of these two, either the guilt of sin, or its disorder and vitiosity.

2. The defilement of sin is represented as producing shame and fear in the sinner in the presence of God. A person in for-

den and defiled garments, or besmeared with mire and nasti-
s, is afraid to come into the presence of his prince, a wise
l just Governor, as well as ashamed to appear before him as
erson of high dignity. Now one of these is the effect of the
lt of sin; the other of its disorder. A sinner fears the jus-
and majesty of God, because of his guilt, and the injury he
done to the divine law; he knows he is liable to death, he
s his own defilement and God's justice, and is afraid and
nbles. A sinner, in his sinful disorder of soul, is also asham-
n the presence of a holy God, seeing every thing in the
ne nature so contrary to his own heart and his own actions,
ıg defiled, that is, disordered by sin. Thus the guilt of sin
luces fear, and the disorder of sin produces shame. A
allel might be drawn in this instance also between the levitical
lements of the flesh and the more spiritual evils of sin. The
e suggestion of this thought is sufficient for those who are
ıainted with the Mosaical ceremonies, and the representa-
s of God, as dwelling in the holy of holies, in the glories of
justice and holiness.

3. The defilement of sin sometimes is represented as de-
ng the nature of the soul, and rendering it vile. Ps.
. 20. *A man without understanding, that is, without fear or love of God, or true holiness, is mean and vile, the beasts that perish:* This arises from the inward
rity or real evil that is in it. Vitious disorders either in
t or life, debase the character of a creature; but under
idea the guilt of sin, or relative evil of it, is not contain-
but only the disorder, or the real evil: But still it is
ı that this representation always means the one or the other.

II. Another way to prove that the defilement of sin is
hird thing distinct from the guilt and the disorder of it, may
ıis: The methods or means of removing the defilement of
ıre such as are suited to remove either the guilt or the disor-
of it.

1. Washing is the most general means to remove bodily
ements; and this is a metaphor which the scripture abounds
ometimes to express the removal of guilt by atonement and
ion, and sometimes the removal of the disorder of sin in
ıouls by sanctification. When we are said to be *washed by blood of Christ from our sins*; Rev. i. 5. there the de-
ıent implied must signify guilt: But when we are said to
rashed and cleansed from a sinful nature, by *having the it of God poured upon us, or by being sprinkled with* ı *water*; Isa. xliv. 3. Ezek. xxxvi. 25. which is done in
ism, and regeneration; or when we are bid to *wash us to make us clean*; Isa. i. 16. in these places the defile-
which is *implied* must signify the sinful disorders of our

natures and lives. This also is very evident in the levitical methods of cleansing the typical defilements of old: sometimes the blood of the sacrifice was to be put on persons defiled, to signify the removal of guilt by the death of Christ the great sacrifice: sometimes they were to be washed in clean water, to signify the removal of the inward moral disorder of sin by the sanctifying Spirit.

2. Another method of removing bodily defilements is by fire: so silver and gold passing through the fire lose their dross and impurity, and are refined and made pure: Now when the defilement of sin is represented as removed by fire, sometimes it signifies the removing the disorderly temper and qualities of mind, by the Spirit of God, or by afflictive providences; see Mal. iii. 2. *He is like a refiner's fire: He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver, that they may offer to the Lord an offering in righteousness*; Zech. xiii. 9. *And I will bring a third part of them through the fire, and refine them as silver is refined.* This was typified by the levitical purifications: The gold and other metals that were under legal or typical defilements, by having been abused to idolatry by heathens, must pass through the fire to be cleansed and fitted for the use of God's holy people, and his holy temple; Num. xxxi. 23. whereas those materials which *could not bear the fire were to be purified by water* for the same service. In the sixth chapter of the prophecy of Isaiah, where he gives an account of his complaint in the presence of the Lord, *I am a man of unclean lips: Woe is me, for I am undone, my eyes have seen the king, the Lord of hosts; a seraph took a live coal from the altar of burnt offering, and laid it upon his mouth, and said, lo this hath touched thy lips, and thine iniquity is taken away: and thy sin purged.* It is hard to say whether this chiefly refers to a pardon of the guilt of past sins of the tongue, or a purification of his lips and heart from sinful disorders. But it is certainly one or both these.

In the last place, I might add another proof that the defilement of sin is not any thing different both from the guilt and disorder of sin, if we consider, that when the guilt of sin is removed by pardon and justification, and the disorder or evil qualities of sin are removed perfectly by sanctification, what is there remaining that can be hurtful to man or offensive to God? It is possible in the nature of things, that the guilt of sin and all obligations to punishment may be taken away from a person by pardoning grace, and yet the impurity or sinful disorder of the soul may remain. It is possible also that the sinfulness or the moral disorder and evil qualities of the soul may be removed by sanctifying grace, and yet the guilt of past sins may remain: But where divine grace hath both pardoned and sanctified the

ul completely, there remains no more moral defilement, no sin-l pollution, nothing more than can give us either fear or shame, hether we appear before God in the justice of his government, in the holiness of his nature. This defilement therefore ppears evidently to be nothing but a figure of speech bor-owed from material things, whereby either the guilt, or the isorder of sin, the relative or real evil of it are represented.

Now though this metaphor of the defilement of sin may ometimes signify the guilt, sometimes the disorderly nature of t, yet let it be noted, that the scripture, in its common forms f speech, does, I think, more frequently use or imply the me-aphor of filth or pollution* to signify the inherent disorder or eal evil that is in sin, than the guilt or relative evil of it; and I elieve we may so understand it in most places where such kind f metaphors are used: and consequently when we use this me-aphor of defilement, pollution, &c. we should rather apply it o the pravity and disorder of sin than to the guilt of it. And articularly let it be observed, that wheresoever the guilt of sin nd the defilement of sin are mentioned together in the writings f our divines, and represented as distinct and different things, here the guilt evidently signifies that offence against the di-ine law which subjects us to punishment; and the defilement nust mean only that evil quality in sin which is contrary to the livine nature or holiness, which makes us unlike to God, and nfit for his presence, service or enjoyment. If this explica-ion of the filth or defilement of sin be admitted, that it some-imes may signify the relative evil, but more frequently and pro-perly the real evil of sin, it will be easy to answer those perplex-ing questions which some persons have raised about this sub-ject, viz.

1. Can the defilement of Adam's first sin be transferred o his offspring by imputation? Answer. If we will speak of he defilement of sin to express the guilt of it, or its relative vil, which exposes us to the just anger of God and to punish-nent, according to the threatenings of his law; it is evident by he foregoing discourses in this book, that it may be imputed to s, for we suffer a thousand painful evils and death at the end f them for the sin of Adam. But if by the defilement of sin e mean as we rather ought to do in accurate speech the real vil of it, or its disorderly nature and contrariety to the image f God in the soul, and as spoiling the best powers of man, un-itting us for converse with God, and naturally tending to our estruction and misery, this is not properly imputed to us from

* Note, I think these express words or substantives, pollution, &c. are scarce er used in scripture, or in human writings, to signify merely the guilt of sin, r the obligation to punishment, without carrying in them the idea of the real vil or disorder, or culpable demerit of sin.

Adam; but this sinful nature is really transferred or deri from Adam to us by the laws of generation or propagation w were given at first to man, as in question vi. and vii. thence it comes to pass that original sin is divided by our lines into *imputed and inherent*: the one is relative, and subj us to the misery threatened, the other is real, and makes us tually sinful.

II. How far was our Lord Jesus Christ our great su concerned in the filth or defilement of our sin? Some nounce it boldly that he took upon him the filth and pollutio our sins, though at the same time they mistake and suppo to mean something really distinct from the guilt. Others a renounce and abominate that thought, lest Christ should represented as defiled with sin; but at the same time t give no fair account or intelligible notion of the filth of distinct from the guilt of it, that guilt which was certa imputed to Christ, when "he was made sin for us, and w he bore our sins in his body on the cursed tree;" 2 Cor. v. 1 Pet. ii. 24.

I think it is evident from many scriptures*, that our l subjection to punishment and misery by the guilt of sin, whic the relative evil of it, was imputed or transferred to Christ, he took it away by offering himself a sacrifice of atonement expiation, which hath procured pardoning mercy for us; neither scripture nor reason will allow that the moral diso of sin, the vicious impurity or criminal pollution, or real evi it; was transferred any way to our blessed Saviour, the "l one of God who knew no sin." While men of controversy much in metaphors they fight in the dark; but if we could suade them to turn these metaphors into proper expressions, bring the disputants into clear and open light, they would tend no more.

If we would speak more distinctly and accurately, and w out a figure on this subject, I think we should not indulge selves to say the "guilt of sin cannot be transferred by imp tion, or that the defilement of sin may be imputed to anoth for either of these will be ready to lead those who hear us some mistake; since, in my opinion, it is evident that the of Adam's sin, or its subjection of the sinner to punishment, imputed to us, and thereby we are born in sufferings. It is

* Several scriptures tell us, "that Christ bore our sins in his own body o tree, that he was made sin for us, that all our iniquities were laid upon him he bare the sins of many, that his soul was made an offering for sin, &c." what is it in or of sin that he bare or took upon him, if not the guilt of it, c obligation to punishment; or suffering thereby, when he willingly becam surety? there is nothing else of sin that he could be charged or burdened or that could be imputed to him, or reckoned to his account, and for which h tually made atonement by his sufferings, and so took away this guilt of sin.

vident that the guilt of our sins was imputed to Christ, for hich he suffered and obtained our pardon; but the disorder r evil nature and qualities of sin, which are transmitted to s from Adam by natural propagation, can never be imputed) our blessed Saviour, nor transferred to him any way whatever.

Yet to express my charity for all sincere enquiries after ruth, I would lay down this conclusion, that if such a sincere, umble and diligent enquirer will neither acknowledge the guilt f sin capable of being transferred to another by imputation, nor ie defilement or sinfulness of nature to be conveyed by propagaon, I will not be angry with him, while he allows what I think ie sense of scripture incontestably reveals and maintains, viz. iat we justly suffer for the sin of Adam in the providence and ghteous government of God, that hereby the children of Adam re born with inclinations to sin, and that Jesus Christ the Son f God was justly "made an offering for our sins, being with is own consent devoted to death for us sinners by God the 'ather.

If christians will but acknowledge the "first Adam was our ead," who some way conveyed unto us natural life, sinful inclitions, diseases and death, according to some righteous divine nstitution or covenant, and that "Jesus Christ, the second dam, was also our better head," who conveys to us spiritual fe, pardon and justification, resurrection from the dead, and mortality by a new and better covenant; and if they practise ie faith, repentance and new obedience of the gospel, peace be ith them all, and everlasting grace in my sincerest wishes, ough they do not subscribe to all my words, nor speak precisely ie same language with me. "Grace and peace be with all those r ever that honestly seek the truths of God, and love our Lord esus Christ in sincerity." Amen.

POSTSCRIPT TO THESE ESSAYS.

SOME of the doctrines maintained in this book depend upon a right notion of imputed sin, or a translation of guilt and punishment from one person to another, which I have explained at large in the second and third essay: But there are some writers in the present age who have asserted, that as guilt is entirely personal and can never be transferred, so innocence and punishment are inconsistent ideas: and consequently no sin of Adam can be punished upon his posterity, nor can they be justly laid under misery for any sins of their father: Nor can the sins of any part of mankind be punished upon Jesus Christ the Mediator. These great and eminent writers the learned Grotius and Dr. Stillingfleet, in their Defences of the Satisfaction of Christ, suppose the actual desert of punishment to be personal and inseparable from the agent or actual sinner; but they suppose still that the guilt or obligation to punishment may be transferred from one person to another; that is to say, sin may be imputed as to the punishment thereof to persons who did not actually commit that sin. I suppose all men will allow those authors were very well acquainted with the civil law, as well as with the light of nature, and the reason of things; and I must acknowledge I fall in with their sentiments as most consistent with reason and scripture. But a certain learned and ingenious writer, who opposes them in these sentiments, maintains, that "there is no such thing as an obligation to punishment, but what consists in a real desert of punishment; nor is there any real guilt but what is personal; and that the punishment of an innocent person, whether with or without his consent, is not only a violation of truth, but is a moral contradiction, for he is no subject of punishment in any respect. No right can be in the universe to punish the innocent, unless there can be a right to violate truth and equity. To punish an innocent person, would be treating him directly contrary to what he is, which is as manifest a violation of truth as can well be conceived." Therefore some infer that the posterity of Adam can never be punished for his sin, nor could our Saviour be punished for the sins of mankind*.

He grants indeed, that the scripture uses these terms of "Christ's bearing our sins, that he was wounded for our transgressions, and the iniquity of us all was laid upon him," with many other expressions of the like nature: But these expressions, he says, are merely figurative, for strictly speaking, he could no more bear our punishment, than he could bear our iniquity, or become sin for us, being both alike essentially repugnant in a literal sense to the truth and nature of things. Thus I have set this objection in the strongest light, and almost in the author's own words; and yet I think it may be effectually answered in this manner:

I. This ingenious author's assertions concerning "guilt, obligation to punishment, and translation of this obligation, and vicarious punishment" of one for the sins of another, &c, are plainly contrary to the common sense and practice of mankind, who often punish the crimes of parents on the children, and of offenders on their sureties. This is known more especially by those who are conversant with the civil law on these subjects; I think therefore such assertions ought not to influence our assent, without most evident proof, any more than the assertions of Dr. Stillingfleet and Grotius, and many other writers upon this theme, who express themselves in direct contradiction to what

* See "An Essay on Redemption, being the second Part of Divine Rectitude," page 3—30; by Mr. John Balguy.

his author maintains. Is it not a thing very commonly practised amongst men, that the children are banished or disinherited of their father's estate, and become poor and miserable for the sake of their father's treason, or other crimes? Is not something of this kind done in almost every nation, without any complaint of injustice, and without any censure upon the magistrate on this account? And why should it be esteemed utterly unjust in things sacred, that the great God should impute sin to the posterity of Adam, by bringing misery and death upon them? Or that he should impute the sins of mankind to his Son Jesus Christ, who was a voluntary surety, and punish them upon him, which is acknowledged to be the plain, natural and literal sense of the expressions of scripture? But we are told, these must be figures and metaphors, because this author does not allow the literal sense to be consistent with truth and justice.

II. This argument for the same reason would forbid any reward to be given to families and posterity, upon the account of great and worthy actions performed by their ancestors: For when the son or grandson of some eminent patriot, or deliverer of his country, has the honour of nobility paid him, which were first given to his father upon his personal merit, this is as much contrary to truth, and as much a falsehood in fact, as if the treasons of a father were punished upon a son. This son or grandson did never perform these glorious and honourable services himself, which is evidently known to the world, and yet the rewards being continued to them, seem to say, that this son or grandson did perform them, in the same sense as this author supposes sufficient to contradict truth, and to destroy all imputation of guilt to another. The translation of rewards in this manner, is as contrary to truth in fact as a translation of penalties.

III. The force of this argument seems to be all taken from the late Mr. Woollaston's supposed foundation of moral virtue and religion, which is built entirely upon natural or logical truth, in his book of *the Religion of Nature delineated*. Truth, as he supposes, may be expressed in actions as well as in words; and consequently, that all such actions as do not represent things exactly in their natural or logical truth, are falsehoods in fact, or a sort of lies, and therefore unlawful and unjust; being contrary to truth, they are contrary to morality, religion and justice. But this notion of Mr. Woollaston has never yet been proved to be true, though there are many excellent sentiments found in that treatise. It is not evident, that God has any where, either by the light of reason or revelation, told us, that actions have the same power to distinguish and determine veracity and falsehood as words have. It has always been granted by our best casuists, that simulation in action, that is, a feint, or disguise, or a mere appearance, or counterfeit of things, may be often good and virtuous, where dissimulation, however it be explained, or falsehood in words, is never lawful or virtuous. But this notion of Mr. Woollaston tends to bring in much superstition, that is to make more sins than God hath forbidden, and more duties than God hath prescribed, by making all simulation in action to be unlawful. And if ever that general doctrine should obtain, it stands in need of many cautions and limitations to guard our consciences from endless scruples, or from intrenching upon morality and truth at every turn. I say yet further, This doctrine seems to forbid all the common conduct even of wise and good men, in covering or disguising any action or design in the civil life, even though the same was practised by our Saviour or his Apostles: It renders all stratagems in war immoral and unlawful, even though appointed by God himself. Let us survey this matter a little.

When God ordered Joshua and all Israel to *lay an ambush behind the city* of Ai, and when by Joshua's command they fled from the battle, *and made as if they were beaten*, Josh. viii. 2, 15, were they guilty of such a falsehood in fact, by their flying when they were not afraid, as turns this action into immorality, or made it unlawful? When Gideon with three hundred men,

whom God had chosen for this purpose, *broke their pitchers, discovered their lamps, and sounded their trumpets*, Judg. vii. 16. whereby the host of Midian were led to believe that there were three hundred troops or companies rather than three hundred men; was Gideon guilty of such a falsehood in fact, as should turn this stratagem into iniquity? When our blessed Saviour, *Luke* xxiv. 28. walking with some of his disciples toward a village, *made as though he would have gone further*, did he exert any action by this simulation, which was inconsistent with truth or righteousness? And yet I know not how it can be defended by Mr. Woollaston's principles. When St. Paul *became as a Jew among the Jews*, and as a gentile among the gentiles, 1 *Cor.* ix. 20, 21. When he took *a vow upon him, and purified himself;* Acts xxi. 23—26. When he *circumcised Timothy;* Acts xvi. 3. Did he falsify truth so as to become criminal?

But to come nearer to the present controversy: When the prophet Elisha pronounced *a leprosy upon Gehazi and his seed*, for the gross crime of his lying and covetousness; 2 *Kings* v. 27. and when this curse was inflicted upon any of his posterity; did this event say to the world, that these children of Gehazi were guilty of such covetousness and lying too? Or was it not consistent with divine veracity to inflict such a curse? When *Phinehas had executed judgment by slaying two idolaters, and God gave him and his seed the covenant of an everlasting priesthood*, Numb. xxv. 11, 13, and his children were successively made priests, was here any criminal falsehood in fact, as though each of these children had performed that glorious execution against idolatry? When the seed of Abraham and Jacob met with many successive blessings from God, upon the account of the special acts of their faith and obedience, which were promised to be thus rewarded; did these numerous blessings on the Israelites declare to the world, that each of these private persons so blessed were actual performers of those acts of faith and obedience? Or was there any criminal falsehood that belonged to these providences? In short, a number of such instances might be cited, wherein it is sufficiently evident, that the doctrine of imputed sin and imputed righteousness is by no means to be charged with those consequences, which learned men who follow this scheme would cast upon them.

It may be queried also, whether this learned author doth not allow, that we are pardoned and made happy on the account of what Christ hath done and suffered, so that the benefit is transferred to us who have never done the meritorious actions? Is this perfectly consistent with the truth of things? He will say indeed, *That all our blessings are properly a reward to Christ:* But since the reward terminates upon us, may it not justly occasion a doubt whether this be entirely agreeable to the sentiment of truth and falsehood in actions as the test of all morality and justice? It must be acknowledged to the honour of this reverend author, who has espoused this notion of Mr. Woollaston's, that he hath argued with just reason and unanswerable force against the deists of the age, and in vindication of the *divine rectitude in creation and providence;* and he hath very ingeniously and happily proved in this same treatise, that *mere repentance and new obedience are not a sufficient ground for sinners to claim pardon and acceptance with God*, the universal Governor of the world: But if any such writers should proceed upon these sentiments of Mr. Woollaston, to demolish the divine doctrines of the "translation of guilt, and of vicarious punishment; of our suffering misery and death on the account of the sin of Adam; and of Christ's being a proper sacrifice for the sins of men in his death, and bearing their sins so as to make atonement for them;" I ask leave, with all the respect I bear to their character, to yield up neither my faith, nor my reason to their assertions.

AN ESSAY.

the Freedom of Will in God and in Creatures.

.—Of Liberty and Necessity, and how far they are consistent.

TY is a word which has been attributed to ideas very
nd different; and *necessity* has also its various signifi-
hence proceeds that confusion and seeming inconsistency
netimes appears among our thoughts, and may have
nd perhaps in some writings on this subject; nor is it
void it in argument of so much difficulty: And there-
peak the candour of the reader while I am attempting
little light into a theme, which has been surrounded
h darkness and perplexity. I shall not run into a wild
all the *distinctions* of necessity which the schools have
: but it seems to be needful for us to take notice in
that a thing is called necessity, "when it must be so,
ot be otherwise, whatsoever be the reason and cause of
sity." If the cause or reason of this necessity arise
very nature of the thing, it is called *an internal or necessity;* so a bowl may be said necessarily to roll
ill: and a beast necessarily to avoid the fire, or to
s thirst when a fountain is near. But if this neces-
from some apparent outward constraint or restraint,
called *an external or forcible necessity:* Thus a
riven up a hill by the force of a stroke impelling it;
t necessarily goes through the fire when he is con-
r dragged into it by outward force; or an ox ne-
ibstains from drink when he is withheld by bars or fet-
a neighbouring fountain. What other distinctions of
are needful, will afterwards appear.

rty stands generally in opposition to necessity of each
h inward and outward; both a necessity of nature, and
of force: and that is certainly the best and most pro-
of it; yet there seem to be some cases wherein
ons which are necessary, have also been called free:
would make a more careful enquiry in this matter, we
a brief survey of the different sorts or kinds of liberty,
e different cases to which this word is applied, and
ay better judge how far necessity is consistent or incon-
th it.

I. Liberty or freedom may be attributed in a figurative sense to inanimate beings; so we say by way of simile, free as the air or wind. It is yet a little more properly applied to animals; so a bird released from its cage is free, or a horse from his bridle or harness. All manner of outward necessity, that is, restraint or constraint, is inconsistent with this freedom of brute creatures. But there are some actions which a beast performs with a kind of brutal freedom, and yet by a sort of natural necessity also. A horse naturally avoids the fire by an inward necessity, though he doth it freely, that is, with all the freedom he has: and when he is thirsty, he freely drinks, yet it is by an inward or natural necessity, where nothing restrains him. But leaving these ideas of a less proper freedom, let us rather consider liberty in its more proper sense, as it belongs to men or other intelligent creatures, or to God himself, who is the Creator.

II. Liberty, as ascribed to intellectual beings, is either *moral* or *natural*. Natural liberty has various ideas, as will appear immediately. "Moral liberty is a freedom from all superior authority:" in this sense, God alone is universally and perfectly free, having no authority superior to himself. But there are many instances of particular moral freedom among men; an apprentice is free from the authority of his master when he has served seven years; and the lad is free from the government of his tutor when his childhood is past, and he commences man. It is no longer necessary that the apprentice should obey his master's commands, nor the youth those of his tutor, which it was morally necessary or plain duty for them to obey before. In this moral sense, necessity or restraint and liberty are evidently inconsistent.

III. Natural liberty must be distinguished into a liberty of *volition*, or a liberty of *action*: The first is a liberty of the will, the last is rather a liberty of the executive powers*. It is this freedom of volition or chusing which is properly the liberty of an intelligent being, and the chief subject of dispute, and not the freedom of the inferior powers from restraint or constraint in acting or executing the determinations of the will. There are many cases wherein the will may be free *to chuse*, but the man is not free *to act*. The freedom of the will is very consistent with the restraint of action: so a person whose mouth is stopped, may be willing or chuse either to speak or to keep silence; and he is free in this choice, so far as the volition

* Note, When action is contradistinguished from volition, I mean chiefly the action or motion of the inferior and executive powers; for in the nature of things, the will is the chief agent, and volition is action in the properest sense; but I fear it deviates too much from the sense of mankind to permit the words action and event to be applied only to the will, and to nothing else, as some writers have done in this controversy. However, it is but a debate about words.

oes; but he is not free to act, for he hath not power to peak if he did chuse it; he is under a necessity to keep ilence. Suppose Simon and Lepidus were locked up in prison rith their friend Crato: Lepidus chuses to go out, but cannot, and is uneasy; Simon chuses to tarry there, and there he arries chearfully: They are equally free in their different choice nd volition; but both are under a necessity to act the same hing, viz. to abide in prison, one according to his choice, the ther against it.

IV. The liberty of the will is generally distinguished by rriters on this subject, into a liberty of *indifference or choice*, nd a liberty of *spontaneity or voluntariness*. Actions of the oul are said to be free with this spontaneous or voluntary freeom, when the soul of man pursues any object or performs any ct, or chuses any pleasure, without any consideration whether t can chuse any other object, or perform the contrary action. This is a most large and extensive sense of the word liberty; or in this sense every act of the will is and must be free, for very act is spontaneous or voluntary; and indeed this freedom f the will seems to be but a dilute idea, for it signifies carce any thing more than it is an act of the will. So we are aid with the greatest freedom to do those actions to which we have the strongest inclination, and wherein we take the greatest pleasure; not considering or enquiring whether these actions are necessary or no: that consideration does not come into this notion of liberty. It is a common instance in this case, that all sensible beings with spontaneity and freedom pursuse what they call pleasure or happiness; yet they are generally said to do this by a sort of necessity too, because it belongs to their nature, and they cannot do otherwise. This is attributed to brutes as well as men. And so the blessed above with perfect liberty love God; yet so constantly, that it appears almost natural and necessary. So God with the strongest and most exalted freedom, and yet unchangeably and necessarily, loves himself as the highest good, and pursues his own glory as the noblest end. Every necessary and immanent action that God doth with regard to himself, and many transient actions towards his creatures, are perfectly spontaneous and free with an absolute liberty of this kind; and yet perhaps he cannot do otherwise, that is, his will natually and eternally and unchangeably determines itself to these actions; he freely and necessarily consults himself in all his designs, and decrees and always acts agreeably to his own perfections; he is freely and necessarily just and true to his creatures.

I know some great writers distinguish here between a *natural* and a *moral necessity*, and call all those actions of the will which are really natural, as well as constant, certain and universal, such as acts of truth, and justice in God, morally

necessary; and will allow scarce any thing to be naturally necessary but what belongs to matter, or to the mere passive, or perceptive powers of a spirit: I grant indeed, that the will, which is influenced by rational motives, is not under such a sort of influence in its actions as bodies are, because bodies are mechanically moved; yet the necessity may be as strong and unalterable: and if it be the very nature of God to act justly and faithfully, so that he cannot will, nor act otherwise, it may be called, I think, a natural necessity, since it springs from his nature; as well as it may be called a moral one, because it is the action of an intelligent and free agent.

Now let us enquire what is a liberty of choice or of indifference. Though necessary actions are sometimes said to be free, when they are done thus spontaneously, as I have described, yet a liberty of choice or indifference in things not necessary is the more common sense in which the word liberty is used: This is the second branch of this fourth distinction, and this implies "a power to chuse or refuse*, to chuse one thing or another among several things which are proposed, without any inward or outward restraint, force or constraining bias or influence." So I feel myself at liberty, and I chuse to stand or walk; I am free and chuse either to speak or keep silence, to point upward or downward; I chuse one egg and refuse another out of two that are offered. Man is free whether he will chuse to honour God his Maker, or dishonour him; to do good to his neighbour, or do him hurt, to keep himself sober, or to make himself drunk: In all these things he may chuse or refuse which he pleases. This is what the schools call *libertas indifferentiæ ad opposita*, that is, a liberty of indifference to chuse one thing, or its opposite. This liberty is utterly inconsistent with all necessity, whether natural or forcible, that is, with all necessity of every kind: whatsoever is any way necessary, or imposed or constrained, cannot in this sense be called free. Whensoever the will is necessarily determined to any act or object by any thing without or within itself, it has not a liberty of choice or indifference; for upon this supposition of its being necessarily determined to one thing, it is evident that it could not chuse the contrary.

V. In the last place, liberty or freedom of the will is either absolute and perfect, or imperfect and comparative. When we chuse or determine any thing without any manner of constraint

* Here note, I do not describe liberty of choice or indifference, as many have done, by a power to act, or not to act, but a power to chuse or refuse; for there is a great deal of difference between a freedom of willing or chusing, and a freedom of acting what we chuse, as I have shewn before: and much darkness and confusion is brought in upon this subject of liberty, by not keeping this distinction clear. Perhaps that great man, Mr. Locke, had writ more perspicuously on this subject, if he had always maintained this distinction, for he describes liberty, a power to act or not to act, &c.

one side, or restraint on the other; when we act or determine one way, without any reluctance or any bias towards the contrary side, this is called *absolute and perfect freedom:* so God chuses to be just and true; so a wise being chuses to follow the dictates of reason wheresoever they appear; so every sensible being is said to chuse and pursue in general what it calls pleasure or happiness, though sometimes it mistakes wherein happiness consists, and follows instead of it a shadow or misichief. *Comparative liberty or freedom* is when the mind has some inward reluctance or aversion to those actions which yet it wills to perform for other more prevailing reasons; or when it has an inward inclination and desire to do some action which yet it wills to neglect, being powerfully impelled by other considerations: so a malefactor may be said freely or voluntarily to go to his execution; for though he has an inward aversion to it, yet he chuses it comparatively, that is, rather than to be dragged thither by force: so a sick man is comparatively free in chusing to drink a bitter potion rather than to bear continued sickness.

Now this sort of volition in common speech is sometimes called not to be free, because the man doth not absolutely chuse it is, but only prefers a less evil to a greater; and the words, not free, in this place signify only a less degree of freedom. Men are ready to conclude in this case, that because in common speaking the man was constrained, or as it were, necessitated to go to the gibbet by a superior motive, therefore he went not freely; though indeed it was an act of choice, or comparative freedom, that is, rather than be dragged: And, by this way of speaking, viz. that he went not freely, we come also to imagine that freedom and necessity are utterly inconsistent things: yet it is plain that though here was a sort of necessity or constraint, yet the man was free and voluntary in his own act. It is no wonder now that there should be such contests and controversies about the nature of liberty, or the use of the word, since it plainly appears that the words not free sometimes signify only less free; and since the same action may be said at the same time to be not free, that is, absolutely, because we do it with some reluctancy, and yet it is said to be free, that is, comparatively, because we do it at last voluntary, and prefer it before something worse. We may also take occasion to remark, that if such actions which are not done with a full freedom may be called comparatively free, then there can be no voluntary acts, or acts of the will, but have some *natural freedom* also, that is, at least a *comparative* freedom: for the will cannot act without so much freedom as this is; and consequently the will itself cannot be really compelled, but natural freedom or liberty will still belong to it in all possible situations; though not always a liberty of choice or indifference.

After all this debate, I will readily acknowledge, that some

of these disputes, whether such and such actions are free or are rather disputes about words then things: And if the w would all agree to confine the words liberty and freedom, signify nothing but a freedom of choice, a liberty of indifferen or a power to chuse or refuse, which is inconsistent with necessity of choice, and which must be allowed to be the u usual sense of it, I should be so far from disapproving o that I think it would be the best way of speaking and writi And therefore I give notice here, that I shall chiefly use word freedom in this sense in the following sections. If we co but always confine every term to one certain determinate i we should gain and preserve much clearer ideas of things; should make much swifter and larger advances in knowled we should cut off a thousand occasions of mistake, and t away a multitude of controversies. But when we are enquir what is liberty of freedom, which in the present sense and us the word among mankind is applied to various cases, we m not explain the word so as utterly to exclude any spontane actions, or actions of the will, which men have frequently cal free, though they also may appear necessary, or in some sti constrained. Among other remarks on this subject, it is pro also to take notice, that our judging concerning *the truth falsehood, fitness or unfitness, good or evil of things*, is genera ascribed to that power of the soul which is called the m *or understanding*: And because when we do pass a judgme we have no power to judge otherwise than as things appear the mind at that time, therefore judgment is called *a necess thing*; and indeed "judgment is but an assent or dissent the mind, as things appear true or false to the mind;" and this account it is supposed to have no freedom or liberty belon ing to it. But if we will make a careful observation of wh passes in the transactions of the soul on these occasions, we sh find that though the mind cannot assent or dissent, cannot jud of things contrary to what they plainly appear, yet the will has great deal to do in our judgments concerning objects proposed the mind.

The will is sometimes led by *appetite or passion*, and h an inclination to chuse a particular object, and then it wish that object to be fit and good: It readily yields to the prejudic that lie on that side, it fixes the mind upon those argumen which tend to prove what it wishes, and turns the thoughts awa from those evidences, which lie on the other side of the questio and does not suffer them to be brought into full view and com parison; and thus secretly it influences the soul to judge th thing it desires to be good or fit, that is, to assent to those argu ments, which are brought to prove its fitness, keeping the con trary arguments much out of sight. It is an old Roman pro

rb, *Quod volumus facile credimus, We easily believe that which e wish to be true:* There is indeed a secret dishonesty and in-ncerity in this conduct, though we are not willing to take notice f it. The will also has power to hasten and precipitate our ked assent or dissent to propositions in the mind, and to hurry n the judgment to determine concerning the fitness or goodness f things upon a slight and insufficient view. The soul of man soon tired and weary of suspense, and the will hastening to noice and action before due evidence, is really guilty of that ish judgment and rash action: For the will has power to with-old the assent in many cases, and to delay the judgment where ings do not appear to the mind with full and bright evidence, nd to set the mind upon searching further, and viewing the bject again on all sides, before it judges concerning its truth, lness or goodness: And by this means the will may take care at the soul pass a juster judgment on things, after a fuller and nger survey of them. And even where things appear with a etty good degree of evidence, the will is able to delay our sent, and withhold it for a season; as for instance, if any arned and knowing friend stand by and warn us of danger and istake, and bid us take heed of assenting too soon, lest we are nposed upon by false appearances, the will is able to prolong e delay of the judgment, and to withhold it from pronouncing on the fitness or goodness of that object.

Let it be observed, that I do not alter our common forms speech, nor attribute *judgment* to the will, though indeed it ems to be some determining operation of the soul, consequent the appearances of ideas in the mind; and therefore it is not erely what some great writers have represented it, viz. *feeling hat we feel, or hearing what we hear;* for we can suspend and elay our assent or judgment, even when a good degree of evi-ence appears to the mind; and we are also led sometimes to ve a stronger or weaker assent, according to the inclinations the will, or desires of the heart, neither of which can be pro-erly said with regard to feeling or hearing. I say again, I will ot directly call judging an act of choice or voluntary operation; nd yet there is so much of this kind of operation in the soul certed about its passing a judgment on things, that I think we ust agree that the will has a great deal to do in it: and there-re the errors, derived from these wilful rash judgments, have mething criminal in them, as well as they lead us into further iminal actions. And were not this the true account of things, cannot see how faith or unbelief of the gospel could have any ing in them worthy either of praise or blame: But this is only int by the way.

Mr. Locke in his Essay, book II. chapter 21. section 47. er some other representations of human liberty, which seem

not to be perfectly just, represents it *to consist much in a power of delaying the execution of our desires, or suspending the acts of volition or choice, until the man has diligently examined on all sides what is best:* Now this no doubt is a very great part of human liberty; and Des Cartes, the French philosopher, with good appearance of reason, makes this power of suspending the acts of the soul to extend to our assent to truth, as well as to the pursuit of good; and therefore he proceeds so far, as to make *judgment rather to belong to the will, and to be justly laudable or blame worthy.* Mr. Locke seems also to come pretty near to the opinion which I have proposed, as appears in the prosecution of this discourse of his about our judgments of good and evil, and our choice and practice consequent thereon; on which subject he has many excellent thoughts on morality.

SECT. II.—*What determines the Will to chuse or act.*

Let us now consider *the human will* in the common sense of it, as that power of the soul whereby we chuse or refuse what is proposed to the mind. The usual principles which are supposed by philosophers to be causes of the determination of the will to act, in chusing one thing, or in refusing another, are chiefly these three, viz. *The greatest apparent good as it is discovered to the mind, or the last dictate of the understanding, or the removal of some uneasiness.* Let us consider these three particularly. First, *the greatest apparent good.* This does not properly mean *moral* good or virtue, but *natural* good, or that which most conduces to our ease, pleasure or happiness. Now this greatest apparent natural good as it is discovered to the understanding, and considered as the cause which certainly influences and determines the will, doth not differ really from the last assent or dictate of the understanding* considered in this same view of influence: for it is the last assent of the understanding concerning the apparent goodness of a thing which is supposed to determine the will to chuse it, and therefore these two are really but one thing under different names or appearances; and as such I shall consider them. Now among other evidences or proofs that *the greatest apparent good does not always determine the will to chuse or act,* I shall mention but these three:

1. If the greatest apparent good always and necessarily determines the will to chuse it, then *the will is never free with a liberty of choice* or indifference; for things placed in such a certain view, or seen in such a certain light, will necessarily appear to that individual understanding, and at that time in such a particular manner, viz. as fit or unfit, as good or evil, as a greater or

* The last assent of the understanding perhaps is a better term, because the last dictate seems to denote too much of action, whereas the understanding is represented properly as a passive power.

ıser good ; and consequently such appearances to the under-
ınding, will, according to this hypothesis, necessarily determine
e will to chuse this greatest appearing good. And this is the
ry scheme of the fatalists, whereby they prove all human
tions to be necessary, and that there is no such thing as free-
ɔm of choice in any intelligent being whatsoever : And accord-
g to this hypothesis, it will not be easy to give a fair and satis-
ctory answer to the arguments which the fatalists bring against
l our notions of moral good and evil, if all human actions are in
is manner necessary : But of this more hereafter.

2. The greatest apparent good does not always determine
e will ; for there are many persons convinced that future happi-
ss pursued in a way of piety and virtue, is really the greatest
ıtural good : this appears very plain to their understanding,
ıd yet their will chuses present sensualities and vicious pleasures,
ıd pursues them in opposition to this greatest apparent good,
ıd the last dictate of their understanding about it. The power
the will to chuse and act in this case continues the same after
e last dictate of the understanding as it did before ; and in
eak and foolish creatures, the will sometimes exerts this power
acting and chusing contrary to it, Some indeed will say, that
this case the mind or understanding being influenced and blind-
l by sensual appetite, makes a rash judgment, and then the
nderstanding finally dictates, that for this present moment vicious
easure is the greatest good, and is to be preferred ; and so the
ill pursues it.

But I rather think it is the violence of appetite or passion
at many times biasses and inclines the will strongly, yet not
cessarily, to follow vicious pleasure ; and this it does without
ıanging the dictate of the understanding, or convictions of the
ind about the greatest apparent good, but rather overpowering
em by present influences ; according to the old poet, *video
eliora proboque, deteriora sequor.* Ask the vicious man, when
e will and chuses to pursue his lust contrary to the convictions
his mind and conscience, whether his conscience be not still
ɔnvinced that it is better to pursue virtue, that is, not only
ıorally better, or more agreeable to the will of God, but it is
aturally better as it conduces to a greater natural good, or final
appiness : and he will frequently confess it, that considered as a
atural good, the practice of virtue, with all its consequences of
ıture or final happiness, is better than vice with its consequences
f final misery : But his strong passions and present appetites
urry on his will to chuse vice before virtue, and thus contradict
ıe dictates of the understanding or conscience concerning the
reatest apparent good, both natural and moral. *Mr. Locke, in
is Essay, book II. chapter* 21. *sections* 35, 38, 43, 44. *talks more
ɔpiously on this subject, and confirms what I have here* expressed.

And let it be considered, that if things be not as I have here represented them, but if on the contrary the will cannot chuse vice unless the last dictate of the understanding determine that vice is at present the greatest apparent good, or vice is to be preferred and pursued, and if then the will must obey the understanding, and chuse sensual vices; then there is no such thing as sin against the convictions of the mind, or the last dictates of the understanding: which is a very absurd proposition, and contrary to all experience; and it frees the criminal from all blame even in the sight of God who has formed his nature and his powers in this connexion.

3. My last reason to prove that the last dictate of the understanding, or the greatest apparent good, does not always determine the will, is, because sometimes two things are proposed to the will, wherein the understanding can give no dictate, because it sees no manner of difference, or at least no superior fitness, nor can possibly represent one as a greater good than another; and here the will cannot be determined by the understanding. Of this I shall say more afterward.

Other philosphers, and particularly *Mr. Locke supposes uneasiness to be the great principle of all the determinations of the will.* See his Essay, book II. chapter 21. section 29, 33—39. But I think it may be proved that the will is not always determined by some uneasiness, as I shall shew immediately: yet by the way I may take notice, that wheresoever uneasiness doth determine the will, this does very little differ from the former principle, viz. that it is determined by the greatest apparent good; for this uneasiness proceeds, as Mr. Locke confesses, from *the absence of some natural good*; and the will determines itself to pursue this absent good, in order to remove this uneasiness. Thus it is good apprehended by the mind in its last dictates, that in these cases is still supposed to determine and direct the will. Or thus: The removal of this present uneasiness is itself the greatest apparent good, and if the will be determined to act thus or thus for the removal of this present uneasiness, then it is still determined by the greatest apparent good. In the 33. and 42. section, Mr. Locke himself grants, *that it is good that determines the will, though not immediately*; and his doctrine seems to be this, viz. *that good, as it is apt to produce ease and pleasure in us, is the object of our desire; and it is this desire of good, raised by the present uneasiness in the want of it, that determines the will.* Does it not then follow, that uneasiness is the remote mover of the will, and desire of good the proxime mover of it? I see no great difference betwixt this and the common opinion, nor ground enough for that great opposition between his doctrine in this point, and the common doctrine, which he seems to represent in two whole sections; for in the

ts of the mind which are instantaneous, and many, as it were, e sometimes crouded into a moment, such as an uneasiness nder the absence of good, and a desire of its presence, &c. it difficult sometimes to say, this or that is first or last: How-ver in this place it is the view and desire of good is allowed to e the next and most immediate mover of the will, I think, by Ir. Locke's own arguing.

Mr. Lee, in his notes upon Mr. Locke, gives some proba-le arguments against his opinion, and proves that uneasiness is ot the sole motive to voluntary actions. This uneasiness, saith e, is a trouble, a kind of pain, a natural evil, and seems rather o be the spring of animal actions and of vicious acts, than of uch as are exercises of virtue, and piety, and charity; and thus t is rather the motive to the wills of the worst or meanest of nen, than to noble and virtuous spirits. So the fear of evil is he motive to the vilest of men to various actions and abstinences; ut love to do as well as receive good, moves the best-constituted ninds. This doctrine of uneasiness seems to govern the actions f men by the principle of brutes, for they are carried by hun-er and thirst and uneasiness towards their natural actions: there-ore it is more honourable and safe to ascribe at least all virtuous ctions to a diviner principle.

To this, let me add another reason or two, to make it more vident that this uneasiness can never be the universal and con-ant cause of determining the will. Suppose a man is pleased nd easy, and perfectly satisfied in his present circumstances, be in his present habitation, in his company, in his manner of fe, in his trade and business, or any thing else: I would ask, Vhat is it determines him to will his continuance in these cir-mstances, his abiding in the same habitation, his conversing ith the same company, &c.? Is it any uneasiness that deter-ines him? Is it not rather his present easiness and sense of easure that moves him to will the continuance of his present se? And Mr. Locke confesses this in section 34. Now I ould ask whether *a will to continue* be not a volition, as well as *will to change.*

Again, Is it uneasiness that determines the blessed God, nd all the holy and happy spirits in heaven, to do what they do? Vould it not have a profane sound to say, that present uneasi-ss determined God to make beasts and men, birds and flowers, create a heaven and an earth? Can we believe that present neasiness determines every angel to chuse and love God the nief good, or to will the several actions wherein he obeys his laker, and executes his orders? Or that it is some present neasiness that causes the saints in heaven to perform their seve-al acts of duty and adoration, or to will their continuance in he service and enjoyment of God? Upon the whole, it is

granted that these three principles, viz. *The greatest apparent good, the last dictate of the understanding, or the removal of present uneasiness*, whether you suppose them distinct or the same, may have a persuasive influence so far as to prevail upon and to incline the will of men to far the greatest part of their volitions or acts of choice: But we have proved that these are not the universal and certain or necessary principles of all the will's determinations.

Let us enquire now whether there are not many instances wherein the will is determined neither by present uneasiness, nor by the greatest apparent good, nor by the last dictate of the understanding, nor by any thing else, *but merely by itself as a sovereign and self-determining power of the soul:* or whether the soul does not will this or that action in some cases, not by any other influence but because it will, and perhaps to shew its own sovereignty or self-determining power. Let us put this case: Suppose I have a mind to prove to an atheist, or a fatalist, that I am a free being, for I can turn my face to the south or the north, I can point with my finger upward or downward, just as I please, and according as my soul wills; and that I have a power to will and chuse which of these motions I shall perform: Now if to demonstrate this freedom, I determine to move my finger upward, or turn my face to the north, it is not because I was under any present uneasiness by standing still without motion; nor was the pointing upward or the looking northward a greater apparent good than looking to the south or pointing downward: Nor could my understanding dictate one rather than the other: but it was a mere arbitrary volition, to shew that I have within me this self-determining power. And thus in some cases the will determines its own actions in a very sovereign manner because it will, and without a reason borrowed from the understanding; and hereby it discovers its own perfect power of choice arising from within itself, and free from all influence or restraint of any kind. And perhaps this may be as good a way to resolve some difficulties that relate to the actions of choice, and liberty of the will, either in God or in man, as any other laborious methods of solution which have not attained the desired success, nor satisfied the enquiring part of mankind. I will not deny but that I am indebted to archbishop King in his treatise of *the Origin of Evil*, many years ago, for my first thoughts of this kind: And in my review of these papers, I am confirmed in these sentiments by an English translation of that book in quarto, with ingenious notes upon it by a writer who conceals his name, printed in 1731*. Though I ask leave in some points to differ from the sentiments of the archbishop in that treatise.

* Since this was written, there is another edition of that book in octavo, with valuable amplifications and corrections, and the learned author, Mr. Edmund Law, has no longer concealed his name.

Sect. III.—*The Will is a self-determining Power.*

Let us see whether this doctrine of the self-determining wer of the will may not be formed into a regular scheme, at-ded with various advantages, and guarded against the most midable objections, in the following manner:

Proposition I. In every spirit or thinking being, whether rfect or imperfect, finite or infinite, there are two such principles powers as may properly be distinguished by our conceptions, to the understanding and the will. These are by no means to conceived as *two real substances* or proper distinct beings; for is one and the same spirit that both understands and wills: and t we have very clear and distinct ideas of these two principles powers of agency in ourselves, viz. We have a power of rceiving and assenting to truth, and of seeing and taking no-e of the fitness or unfitness, the goodness or evil of things; is is called the understanding, or sometimes the mind: And e have also a power of willing or chusing one thing, and refus-g another, of preferring one thing before another, of determining ir choice to one thing rather than another; and this is called e will. As we are evidently and strongly conscious of these wers in ourselves, so we reasonably ascribe the same to other irits, supposing them to be of a similar constitution: And e are taught also to form the same ideas of God, our Maker, hom the light of nature and scripture represent to us as *a Spi-t*, and *we are made after his image, as well as are his offspring:* hn iv. 24. Gen. i. 26. Acts xvii. 28.

II. The eternal reason and nature of things seems to point it this practical truth to us, or rather this rule of action, viz. *at where a being is possessed of two such powers, one of them, z. the understanding, which perceives the fitness or unfitness, od or evil of things, should be a director or guide to the other wer which is active, viz the will,* that it may regulate and de-rmine its actions wisely, and chuse and refuse objects proposed it according to the fitness or unfitness, good or evil which is scovered by the understanding: And that wheresoever greater grees of fitness or goodness are discovered by the understand-g in any object, there also the will should determine its choice ther than to objects less fit, or less good.

III. But where there is no such superior fitness or goodness things, or where it cannot be discovered by the understanding, t the objecst which are proposed appear equally fit or good, ere the will is left without a guide or director: And therefore must make its own choice only by its own determination, it ing properly a self-determining power. And in such cases the ill does as it were make a good to itself by its own choice, that , creates its own pleasure or delight in this self chosen good; ough it be not abstractly and in itself better, that is, fitter than

it was before: Even as a man by seizing upon a spot of unoccupied land in an uninhabited country makes it his own possession and property, and as such rejoices in it. Where things were indifferent before, the will finds nothing to make them more agreeable than they were, considered merely in themselves, besides the pleasure it feels arising from its own choice, and its perseverance therein. We love many things which we have chosen, and purely because we chose them. Let us survey these two cases supposed in the second and third propositions a little more particularly. And, first, let us consider the case where some superior fitness or goodness doth appear to the understanding.

IV. If the thinking being or spirit be wise or perfect, *then it will act according to that eternal rule of action which rises from reason and the nature of things*; that is, whatsoever the understanding apprehends and judges to have a greater or superior fitness or goodness in it, the will being guided by the understanding, prefers and determines itself to chuse it, and refuseth the things that appear less fit, as well as those which are unfit or evil. This it doth constantly and certainly, so far as the being is wise; for this is one chief thing wherein consists the perfection or wisdom of a spirit, viz. to chuse and prefer what appears to be fit and good above what is unfit or evil, and also to chuse that which is better or more fit, above that which has less fitness or goodness.

V. Though the will of intelligent beings is generally and should be always led or influenced by the greatest fitness and goodness of things wheresoever it appears to the understanding, yet it is not necessarily and absolutely determined thereby: for the will of an unwise being may possibly determine itself *without regard to the understanding*, and even *contrary* to what the mind judges to be fit or good. And it may do this many ways, viz. *by negligence, by sudden humour, caprice, or wantonness*: The will through these influences may suddenly and rashly prefer evil to good, or that which is less fit to what is more fit. Or the will may be tempted and led away to chuse what is not really good, by the enticing and soliciting powers of strong appetite and passion, contrary to the judgment of the understanding. It is true indeed, the will may chuse and determine to resist those importunate passions, but it is true also that it may obey them without regarding the mind, or in opposition to the better dictates of the understanding: For though the mind is given us for *a director or adviser, yet not as an absolute lord or ruler*. It is the will that is properly the moral principle or agent within us, the proper subject of virtue or vice, and therefore it must be a free and a self-determining power, and must chuse of itself, whether it will follow reason or appetite, judgment or passion. And

herefore it is, that whensoever the will determines contrary to he dictates of the understanding or conscience, it is both *unwise nd highly criminal*, because such a spirit acts directly contrary to the light or law of nature, the great rule of reason, and he appearing fitness of things: And this gives just occasion to harp reproaches and torments of conscience, when the will has letermined contrary to the dictates of conscience, that is, of the nderstanding.

VI. Though sins against conscience are too frequently committed, yet the chief reason why imperfect beings so often chuse nfit or evil things, and prefer them to what are fit and good, is ot merely from this negligent humour, or a wanton and capricious turn of the will, or the mere compliance with violent appete or passion in determining its choice contrary to appearing fitess or goodness, as represented by the understanding; but it rises perhaps most frequently from *the understanding, apprehending and judging some things to be fit or good upon a ight view of them*, which really are not so, and from the will's nclination or wish, through the false bias of appetite or passion, hat such a thing *should be fit and good*, before mature examination, and from its determining to search no farther; the ill precipitates the judgment, hurries it into error, and acts nd chuses rashly upon present slight appearances. And indeed n this case the will, which might yet longer suspend the judgment by putting the understanding upon a farther search, is riminal in permitting a judgment to pass on things upon such light appearances of fitness or goodness, and determining its hoice according to them, instead of delay, and further search nd enquiry.

Mankind, of whom I chiefly speak here, are often led stray in this mstter by the false representations which passion nd appetite, sense and fancy make of things to the understanding. We commit many mistakes about the fitness or goodness of things, *by seeing them in a deceiving situation, in a alse light, and under a disguise;* by beholding things *but in art* and in an imperfect manner, by the numerous prejudices f many kinds that lead imperfect creatures astray in their judgment of things. And we are generally too ready to pass a ash and hasty judgment and determination of what is fit and ood, before a thorough examination. We soon grow weary f a state of suspense and doubt about the fitness or goodness of hings: and there is often found an impatience in the will to letermine itself one way or another with speed, as well as an nclination that such a thing should appear fit and good according to the bias of sense and appetite; and thus it often *chuses vil instead of good.*

VII. Indeed, if we happen to pass a false judgment from

the mere imperfection of our natural capacities, or under the influence of any of these prejudices which we had no manner of means nor power to resist or subdue; this mistake of judgment, and the unhappy choice of the will according to it, seem to be innocent, and merit no blame. But when we give up ourselves to a rash determination of judgment or choice under such prejudices as might be resisted, or when we yield to this impatience of the will, and wilfully neglect a further search where we might have justly delayed, and searched further, and by this means our will prefers real evil to good, or chuses things less fit before things which are more fit, we herein become culpable: And this faultiness hath greater or less degrees, according to the different opportunities, advantages and capacities we had to examine, judge and chuse aright.

And let it be observed, that as unwise spirits determine amiss in their judgment and choice of things, through *haste or rashness*, or through a sudden and strong bias of *appetite or passion, &c.* so a spirit which is wise may, through unwatchfulness, suffer itself to be betrayed into such a rash and false judgment, and such an unhappy and criminal action, and chuse evil instead of good. And perhaps this was the true spring of *the fall of man from his state of innocence, and the entrance of sin into the world.* Hitherto we have spoken chiefly concerning the determination and choice of the will in those cases where the understanding represents one thing as fitter and better than another: But let us now consider the case supposed in the third proposition, where there is no such superior fitness or goodness, or where it doth it not appear to the understanding.

VIII. There may be several things proposed to the understanding even of a wise and knowing, but imperfect spirit, wherein the superior fitness or unfitness is concealed, and doth not sufficiently appear to the understanding, so as to give any just and certain direction to the will, which of them to chuse or refuse. In some cases it is plain that the understanding, after all proper surveys and enquiries, is left in perfect suspense about the greater or lesser fitness of things, and the will may be perfectly indifferent to them: And yet the will may without fault or folly determine itself to chuse the one or the other; as for instance, if I am hungry, and two pieces of bread, or two cakes lie before me, which appear to be equally good for food, at equal distance from me, and in all other circumstances have no discernable inequality, so that I am entirely indifferent to either of them in particular, yet my will may determine itself to chuse and eat one of them to satisfy my hunger: but which of the two I shall chuse must be determined by the mere act of my will, for I cannot stay an hour in suspense and trifling enquiries. Perhaps one of these pieces of bread might be really in itself much fitter for my nourishment

the other; or, perhaps there might be secret poison in the and not in the other; but I knew it not; they were equal to n appearance, and therefore was not led to determine my choice ny superior appearance of fitness or goodness; yet my will rmined itself to chuse one of them because it is a self-deter- ing power, and hath perfect freedom of choice within itself: herein there is nothing foolish or criminal, even though I ld happen to be poisoned by it, by taking that piece which unfit for my nourishment.

IX. As there may be several things proposed to a very wise intelligent being, wherein he can discern no superior fitness goodness, so there may be some things proposed wherein e is really no superior fitness or goodness at all; yet it may be t particular seasons that one of them should be chosen. This common case; as when two bricks, suppose them called A B, lie before a builder, which are equally fit to fill up such cancy in the wall, and both lie equally near his hand, and equal in every other appearing circumstance; the builder t not stay an hour to debate with himself, and to determine ch brick to chuse for filling up this vacancy; that would be indeed: But his will freely and of itself chuses the brick merely because he will, and leaves B, or refuses it: Then, hinted before, this brick A becomes so far better by his chus- it, as that he approves of it in its place in the building above other, and delights in his own choice or work. Or take ther instance: Suppose a man be desired to shew his power self-determination, or of pointing with his finger, and he its to the North, or to the East, to the heavens or to the h; here is no superior fitness or unfitness in the one or the r, but he points upward, or northward as he pleases; his determines for no other reason but because he will, and eby shews his own self-determining power in all this; though perfectly arbitrary, yet there is nothing foolish or faulty.

We may find instances of this kind in moral actions as well as ral: Suppose God requires Abraham to offer a lamb out of flock in sacrifice, and Abraham taking a survey of the twenty st lambs of his flock, cannot find which is the best of them; own will must finally determine and chuse any one of them the altar. Or let it be supposed that I have ten farthings in purse, and I meet with a dozen beggars, all so equally poor miserable, that I cannot discern which is the most or which he least indigent: I must necessarily leave two of these men of my distribution, but my understanding cannot direct me ch these two are, nor can it tell me which are the ten fittest cts of my charity. What can determine my choice here but own will by its self-determining power? The understanding uch instances as these, has no pretence of power to direct or

determine the will, because it sees no superior fitness, and the will would be for ever undetermined, if it did not determine itself.

SECT. IV.—*How the Will of God determines itself.*

Now let us try to apply these things to the great and blessed God in his counsels and actions; always remembering, that when we speak of these divine and unsearchable themes, we do not pretend nor assume so much as to determine that things must be literally just so transacted in the divine counsels, but that we speak of God as acting according to the manner of men, and so far as our ideas can reach those sublimities.

X. The great God, whose understanding is perfect, sees all the real and possible fitnesses and unfitnesses, good or evil, which are in things, as they are contained in his own eternal ideas: He beholds all that is fit or unfit, whether the things themselves are actually existent, or only possible, because he sees all the infinite relations of things to one another, with all their consequences, in a simultaneous and comprehensive view. —Here note, that I do not meddle with the debate whether there can be any fitness or goodness in things antecedent to or abstracted from the being of a God. Had there not been a God, there had never actually existed such real fitnesses, nor such ideas at all. Yet it is certain we may conceive of such fitnesses antecedently to our conception of the being of a God. This is plain and evident, that God is eternal, and his ideas are eternal, and these fitnesses of things also are eternal: and perhaps these fitnesses of things can have no original existence nor eternity but in the divine ideas, and consequently are included in the unchangeable nature of God.

And this is one argument whereby, as I remember, the late ingenious Mr. Norris somewhere proves the being of a God, viz. that there are certain eternal truths or propositions, natural, mathematical and moral, such as, *three and three make six*; *two parallel lines will never meet*; *the whole is greater than any of its parts*; *and God is to be honoured by his intelligent creatures.* Now these eternal unchangeable truths are not a mere nothing, and therefore they must have an eternal existence somewhere, and this cannot be but in some eternal mind which is God. But however that matter be resolved, this is certain, that all these eternal fitnesses lie open to the divine mind, and are part of his unchangeable ideas, which is all that my present argument requires.

XI. When we consider or speak of the decrees of God, or his determinations what he will do, or what he will not do, we are constrained to acknowledge that his will always chuses and determines to act what is fit and good: that is, in our way of conceiving, wheresoever there is an eternal fitness or unfitness, good or

vil in things, he always determines to act according to this fitness, and this goodness; for to act an unfit thing would be unwise, and to act a thing which is evil, would not be good; whereas the blessed God is perfectly wise and perfectly good in all his works and his decrees, in his creation and providence, and government of the world; he is faithful to his promises, he is righteous and just in his determinations, he is kind in his conduct towards his creatures so far as the rules of wisdom and justice admit: Nor is it possible that God should be or act otherwise than according to this fitness, where there is any fitness or goodness in things, since these eternal and unchangeable fitnesses exist in his ideas, and for God to act against them, would be unfit and unwise, and unbecoming the character and nature of a God.

XII. For the same reason his will exerting itself in a way of government, determines all the rules of moral virtue and piety for the practice of his creatures, according to the original and eternal fitness of things, wheresoever there is such an eternal fitness. As for instance, that *God our Creator is to be honoured, and loved, and worshipped, and obeyed; that promises and contracts are to be fulfilled; that one man must not take away another man's life or property by force or fraud, &c.* All which are moral propositions of eternal truth.

XIII. God has made these moral rules known to men to be his will two ways, viz. by reason and by revelation. 1. *By reason*, that is, by forming their natural powers of thinking and reasoning in such a manner, that when they set themselves to a careful and due consideration of the relation of God to his creatures, and of creatures to one another, they cannot but infer these propositions to be true, and to be most proper rules to govern their practice; and that God, who has formed their reasoning powers in this manner, has hereby made these things their duty. As our reason is so formed, that in natural things it is impossible we should judge otherwise than that *three and three make six, or the whole is greater than a part*: so in moral things we cannot judge otherwise, when we have the idea of a God, than *that God our Maker is to be honoured and worshipped, &c.* And when our reason judges thus, then it appears to be the will of God, and we are obliged to perform and obey it as our Maker's will.

2. *By revelation*, or scripture, God has also manifested these rules of moral virtue or natural religion, and thus confirmed the law of nature or dictates of reason, and given a double discovery of these duties to those who live where this revelation is published, and a double obligation to the performance of them. Here let it be observed, that I enter not into the controversy, Whether these moral propositions about eternal fitnesses

of things would have the force of laws, and carry any proper obligation with them upon the mind and will of man without the consideration of the existence of God, and of his will thus found out by our reasoning powers. I am rather inclined to think that it is the will of God as manifested by reason or revelation, which lays the true and proper moral obligation on the practice of intelligent creatures; but I avoid the embarrassing my present scheme of thoughts with that dispute. It is evident enough, that in the grand lines of moral virtue and piety there are these eternal fitnesses; and our reasoning powers, when they have found out the being of a God, and our relation to him, must also acknowledge they are so far the will of God, that we are obliged to practise according to these moral fitnesses, these eternal rules of virtue.

XIV. But there may be several things supposed to come within the view of the divine mind, or the understanding of God, considered as a Creator, which have no real fitness or goodness in themselves, or at least which have all an equal fitness or equal goodness to answer any general or special design of God: And if they are considered in all the various relations in which they stand either to God himself, or to other things in the universe, there is no real superior fitness or goodness in any of them above the rest, so that they appear perfectly indifferent in the divine idea. Now in such instances the will of God, as a sovereign agent, has no determination from his own ideas, and therefore in and of itself determines itself to chuse one thing and not another; and, as it were, makes that thing good, that is, makes it pleasing to himself, by his own determination or choice of it. Wheresoever the infinite knowledge of God sees no goodness nor evil in the ideas of things themselves, he can make them so far good by fixing his own free will and choice upon them, that they then are agreeable and pleasing because of his free choice, which before were entirely indifferent. And I think we may, without injury to the dignity of godhead, suppose him to be better pleased now with those his works which he has actually wrought or determined into *actual existence*, than with those which he has left in the state of mere *possibility*, though antecedent to this determination they might be both equally fit or good.

And indeed there seems to be a great number of instances of this kind relating to God and his works: as, What sort of system of beings he would make, and whether minds, bodies, or both? What should be the precise shape, and what the precise place of every corporeal being in the world? Whether this whole universe, or the sun in our system, should have one atom in it more or less? Whether the whole or any part of it should have been created one moment sooner or later? In what precise spot of our solar world *Jupiter or Saturn*, or any of their satellites

r this earth or its moon should be first placed; or whether any f them should have one particle of matter more or less in them, han they have, or this or that particle lie in any other situation? Whether this single atom of mould or clay should be part of the lebe at *Taunton* or *York*, or whether this grain of sand or pebble should be found on the shore of *Deal* or *Dover*, or on the oasts of *Africa or the East Indies?** Whether this particle of vater should belong to *the Severn or the Thames*, or should be lowing this moment in the *Atlantic or the Mediterranean Sea;* r whether this particle of air should be found in *Essex, or Hertfordshire, or in America* on this day, this hour, and this econd of time? On what particular branch such a bird should it at such a minute, and what notes it should sing; and how nany leaves should grow on such a bough, and how many inentings on the edge of every leaf; how many colours should low on the cheek of such a tulip, or yellow seeds lie in the osom of a rose; whether this particular human soul should be nited to a body born in *Lapland or Russia, Britain or China;* r this child should be created for a tall stature or a dwarf, or be rought into the world in the seventh or seventeenth century; vhether this drop of rain should fall upon a ploughed field or a ock, or this bright sun-beam should light on me or my neighbour, on the earth or the moon: And perhaps ten thousand ther things, and that of much greater importance in their conequences, may have no superior fitness or unfitness in themelves, but are all equal and all indifferent. And here the will f God, by and of itself, as a free and sovereign power, determines itself in its choice, and as it were makes it so far more greeable and good to himself by his own choice and determination, and he delights in his own will and purpose, and in the correspondent works of his hands.

XV. When God out of mere sovereignty and good pleasure hath determined by his will to chuse and create one sort of world or system of things out of two or two thousand which perhaps were equally fit, or to make this or that sort of creatures in this world; he then may be said to be led by the nature and relations of those things, and by consequential proper fitnesses which belong to that system, or to those creatures, to determine those things of a natural or moral kind, which are proper for those creatures, or for that system. As for instance: Supposing just such a world to be created as ours is, then perhaps consequently it must have such laws of motion: Or, if man be created ex-

* I have dwelt too long perpaps on such minute and inconsiderable instances as these; but I did it partly to intimate how universally the great God is laid under necessary and minute limitations, if these things were not indifferent; and partly to give occasion to diffuse our thoughts into like instances in the animate, human, and angelic worlds, which perhaps are as little and indifferent in the esteem of God, as these minute inconsiderables are in our esteem.

actly such a being as he is, then it is proper that he should have such ideas, such notions and sentiments, &c. and that he should live under such certain laws and rules of action. But perhaps several of these are not *eternal laws* or rules either of nature, or motion, or morality to other sorts of creatures, or other systems which God might have chosen to create. Therefore though we may assert some to be eternal laws or rules for all possible worlds, yet it is hard for us to say in all cases, how far these eternal fitnesses extend. And we have reason enough to suppose that many things even in our present system of nature are not determined from their *eternal superior fitness*; but that thousands of possibles even in our system might be equally fit in themselves, and it was the will of God, the Creator, that sovereignly chose some particulars above others, and made them actually exist, *and behold they are all very good.*

XVI. So when we consider God as a Governor in appointing such *positive laws and rules of duty* for his creatures, which are not contained in the law of nature, there may be instances wherein among a thousand possible rules or laws each of them may be fit, and yet there is no superior fitness in one above the rest: Then the will of God by and of itself determines and chuses what positive laws, what duties he will command or prescribe to his creatures, and he makes the thing which he prescribes more fit and good for us to practise merely by his own choice, determination, and command: as whether *the tabernacle of Moses should have just such a number of boards or curtains pins or tacks in it: whether every board or every curtain should be just so long and so broad, to the thousandth part of an inch; whether the sacrifice of the paschal lamb, the red heifer, and the whole burnt-offering on the great day of atonement, should have every the least ceremony of washings, burnings, sprinklings,* &c. belonging to them, so precisely adjusted in that very form as they are appointed in the books of Moses: In short, I would ask whether every point and tittle of every ceremony and positive duty which God has appointed from the beginning of the world to this day, had in itself and in the nature of things, such a superior fitness, that it could not be determined otherwise: Surely it is much more becoming and proper for us to think and say, that God has determined these things by his own will or self-determining power and free choice: For it seems to me a very harsh and bold affirmation, that not one of all these punctilios could ever have been otherwise appointed by God himself, as we shall take notice immediately.

XVII. Thus whether we consider man as a natural or a moral agent, and whether we consider God either as a Creator or as a Governor, there seem to be several instances wherein there is no superior fitness or unfitness of things, that appears

o the understanding to give any direction to the will in its hoice: And as the nature of the will in itself is a power of hoice or self-determination, so in these instances it eminently ppears that it must be left to determine and chuse for itself vithout any direction of the understanding.

SECT. V.—*The Advantages of this Scheme of Liberty.*

This scheme of the liberty of the will, and of the spring of ts choice and determination, as residing within itself, has many dvantages attending it; and they are such as these:

I. We are hereby led evidently to *a self-moving power*, to principle of motion or proper action in man, which we are conscious of continually, and which we feel and experience in ourselves to be the active spring of those voluntary motions which we excite in our own bodies, and thereby in the bodies that are ound about us: And this leads us by fair reasoning to infer, hat since we neither did nor could give being to ourselves, to our self-moving powers, or to other creatures, there must be ome such *supreme self-moving power which is the Author and Creator both of bodies and spirits*, that is, of all active and passive beings. Whereas the contrary opinion, which supposes the will to be always necessarily determined by the *understanding*, and the understanding always determined by the *appearances of things*, gives us no discovery of any self-moving principle or power in this world; and while the same opinion supposes the will of God to be in the same manner universally, eternally and unalterably moved and determined by the appearances of things in his ideas, and their superior fitness, it gives perhaps too much advantage to the atheist and the sceptic to doubt whether there be any self-moving power at all or no, whether there be any first-moving spirit, that is, a God. This doctrine has in fact been employed to this wretched purpose.

II. This opinion asserts and attributes the most proper and most rational doctrine of full freedom to every intelligent creature, and conveys a clear idea of their liberty both in those spontaneous actions where the fitness of things so fully and evidently appears, as powerfully to persuade the will, as well as in all other actions where the fitness doth not appear with such full evidence and power, or finally in those things where there is no superior fitness at all appearing. Every action determined by the will of man is free, because the will is a self-determining power. Whereas in the other scheme, which supposes that the *will of man in every action whatsoever is certainly and necessarily determined by the last dictate or judgment of the understanding, and that the understanding is necessarily determined in its judgment by present appearances of things* as to their fitness or unfitness, there is really no perfect liberty of indifference or freedom

of choice left to man, or to any intelligent being in any action: but all is necessary with *a natural necessity*, all is fate; for nothing can be otherwise than it is: And this opinion has given an unhappy occasion to the principles of the fatalists in all ages.

III. This scheme of things supposes the truth of what we daily find in common life, that there are many objects and actions which are equal or indifferent to us, and which have no appearing superior fitness or goodness in them; and yet it gives us leave to enjoy the pleasure of any of these indifferent objects or actions by the free choice and self-determining power of the will. Whereas if the will must always be determined in its choice by some superior appearing goodness or fitness, we could never come to enjoy any of the satisfactions that may arise from these equal and indifferent actions or objects, because we should be held in everlasting suspense between them, as the ass in the problem between two like and equal thistles, and never be able to taste one of them, having nothing that could determine our choice.

IV. This doctrine of the self-determining power of the will *sets the nature and distinction of virtue and vice in this present state in the truest light, together with the rewardable or punishable properties thereof:* This shews how acceptable to God are the good actions of men, as being the effects of *free choice;* the will having always a natural, free and self-determining power of its own choice, even after things are represented to the understanding in their fitness or unfitness, in their good or evil appearances: And at the same time it lays the fault of every criminal action *only upon the creature*, by allowing the will to have a natural free power either to determine suddenly and rashly, and to precipitate the judgment concerning the fitness of things, and thus betray itself into a wrong choice, and by allowing it a free power also to suspend the judgment of the understanding in opposition to any slight appearances of fitness or goodness, and to search yet further, and wait for further evidence. This scheme also *fixes the guilt of evil actions entirely on the will of the creature*, by ascribing to the will a free power to determine itself, either to chuse or to refuse after any representations of good or evil, fitness or unfitness made by the understanding. This doctrine therefore sets vice and virtue in their true natures, their merit or demerit, and represents them as suited to their different rewards.

Whereas the other scheme, which determines the will always and certainly by the understanding, and determines the understanding by the situation and appearance of things, seems to take away the true nature and distinction of vice and virtue; for the sublimest virtues and the vilest of vices actually practised would rather be matters of fate and necessity, flowing naturally and necessarily from the existence, the circumstances, and pre-

sent situation of persons and things: For this existence and situation necessarily makes such an *appearance to the mind*; from this appearance flows a necessary *perception and judgment* concerning these things; this judgment necessarily *determines the will*; and thus by this chain of necessary causes, virtue and vice would lose their nature, and become natural ideas and necessary things, instead of moral and free actions; and thus there would be nothing really rewardable in the one, or blameable and punishable in the other. This also the atheists and the fatalists have formed into so strong an argument, as it is very difficult to give a fair answer to them, if we suppose the will to be necessarily determined in every act by the ideas and assent of the understanding. To confirm this notion of virtue and vice proceeding from the self-determining power of the will; let us consider, that all mankind naturally and constantly suppose the determinations of their wills to be *their own actions*, whether they be good or evil: for however they might, from a principle of pride and vanity, assume the honour of good actions to themselves, though they were not entirely their own, yet they would not impute evil actions to themselves, if they did not feel themselves to be the proper cause of them by the free determinations of their own will. The soul or conscience of man charges him with acting amiss, when his will has chosen that which is evil, and brought misery upon himself; and hence arise sharp and bitter inward reflections, and sorrows of another kind than those which proceed from mere calamities which were necessary, and which he could not avoid. Nor can we suppose the God of nature would have placed such a principle in mankind, as should naturally excite him to bitter anguish and self accusation for actions which were naturally necessary, that is, if he were determined to them necessarily by his perceptions, and in which his will had no self-determining power or choice.

V. This doctrine of the self-determining power of the will, shews us a wise and good man in his true character, viz. whose will, though it be a self-determining power, and can chuse contrary to the understanding, and can obey the influences of appetite and sinful passion, yet it suffers itself to be directed and always determines it choice by the fitness or unfitness of things, as they are represented by the understanding after a due examination and survey, wheresoever this fitness or unfitness appears. And in this conduct he imitates the blessed God, who never acts contrary to these appearances of fitness or unfitness, never determines any thing contrary to the eternal reasons and relations of things as contained in his own ideas, but always chuses and acts in conformity to them.

VI. This gives us the clearest, the easiest, and the most unexceptionable account *how sin came first into the world*. Man

in paradise was wise and innocent, but imperfect in a state of trial. Sense, or appetite, or passion, or all these together, joined with the devil in the serpent to make a false representation of things to his understanding, without giving him sufficient evidence to have determined his judgment on their side, and influenced his choice: Then his will, which ought to have suspended his judgment till he had made further search and enquiry, did in some heedless and unwatchful moment, rashly suffer the soul to assent to falsehood, and as rashly and hastily followed these false representations, and determined its choice to evil instead of good. Or we may suppose, that the will being tempted and enticed strongly by appetite and passion, both by an inordinate sensual appetite to *the forbidden fruit*, and inordinate *desire of knowledge* and ambition of being *as a god*, determined itself rashly, without delay and enquiry, to obey and comply with the strong bias of present appetite and passion, without waiting for a mature judgment of the understanding; and thus man chose what was evil, and disobeyed his Maker: And herein man appeared highly criminal in his first sin, and the fault must be laid entirely upon himself, because it was a free act of his will, which was a self-determining power. And indeed there is no such thing as actual sin, properly speaking, but in free acts of the will. Whereas if we suppose the understanding to be necessarily determined to judge *according to the appearances of things*, and the will necessarily to follow the judgment of the understanding; then the blame will be ready to be cast on the providence of God which placed Adam in such circumstances, as that such false representations should be made to his understanding which he could not avoid, and which would necessarily first determine his judgment, and consequently his choice of evil, and his disobedience to his Maker. I will not assume so much as to pretend this is the only way whereby we can account for sin's coming into the world, and making its first entrance into the innocent heart of the first man; but I think this gives as fair and easy a solution of it, as any that I have found.

VII. This doctrine shews us the excellency and rewardableness of *faith in the gospel of Christ*, and the criminal nature of unbelief. When the Christian revelation is proposed to man as coming from God, it becomes man as a rational creature to consider the proofs and evidences brought to confirm it, the prophecies, the miracles, the internal excellencies, and all external testimonies that come with it: And it is the will which must employ and determine the mind to dwell upon these enquiries diligently and faithfully, in proportion to the merits of the cause, to keep the heart sincere and unbiassed in the enquiry, to attend carefully to every gleam of light, and every argument, and to suffer itself to be convinced, at last, by the preponderating weight of

reasoning, laying aside every prejudice of flesh and mind, of appetite and passion, of pride and self-sufficiency, of antiquity and novelty, of education and company, &c. and not to pass a judgment without such evidence as appears to be just and sufficient. This is a work of self-denial and sincerity, diligence and labour, to keep the mind in a wise suspense till arguments appear convincing, and then to yield up all its former mistakes and prejudices to this conviction. This is truly rewardable in the sight of God. *Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed*; John xx. 29.

On the other hand, it is the will of man that hath the chief hand in infidelity: It is the will that indulges prejudices against the gospel, it refuses to apply and hold the mind close to a diligent and faithful survey of it with all its evidences; or it wisheth the gospel may not be true, because it restrains its appetites or evil inclinations; or it determines against it rashly upon slight and insufficient grounds; it indulges an aversion to it without reason, and thereby becomes culpable, and is justly punishable. *He that believeth not shall be damned*; Mark xvi. 16. Whereas the contrary opinion, which makes faith or unbelief, assent or dissent to the gospel, and acceptance or rejection of it, to be the necessary effect of present appearances of things to the understanding, and supposes things necessarily to appear according to the circumstances and situation in which they are placed, without interesting the free will and choice of man at all in the matter of faith or unbelief; this opinion, I say, goes a great way toward the excusing of infidelity as innocent, and taking away the virtuous character and rewardableness of faith in the gospel.

VIII. This doctrine of the self-determining power of the will allows the blessed God a full freedom of choice in distributing his favours to which of his creatures he pleases, and in what degrees. It lays a just foundation of praise and thankfulness for all the free actions of his goodness and kindness to his creatures, according to those degrees of mercy and bounty which he distributes among them; because he is not obliged to all those particular actions or objects by a necessary and superior fitness, since he might have chosen to neglect those objects, or to manifest equal or superior goodness to other creatures, or to do it in much less degrees, or in other ways and manners, any of which might have been equally fit and proper: as for instance, God might have brought forth the soul of an American savage in the British islands, surrounded with light and knowledge; or have produced me among the savages in America in gross darkness, as well as in Great Britain, a land of light. My soul might have been united to a body born of African idolaters: he might have made me blind and a cripple, as well as given me health and eye-sight; I might have had the brain of an idiot, and been bred up with-

out knowledge, as well as enjoyed my share of intellectual powers and advantages of learning; he might have formed me the child of a beggar, made me an heir to filth and wretchedness, and trained me up to ask my bread from door to door, instead of the comfortable circumstances which I enjoy, and the parents from whence I came. We cannot but suppose it possible for the great God to have found a way to have made these things comport with his grand scheme and counsels in the universe, if he had so pleased; but he has chosen and determined better things for me from his own free will and sovereign goodness, and blessed be his name.

IX. This doctrine manifests and maintains the just distinction between the moral and positive commands of God, while we suppose his moral commands and prohibitions to be drawn from the eternal fitness or unfitness of things, whereas his positive commands and prohibitions are for the most part, if not entirely, the free and arbitrary determinations of his will and choice. I do not call them arbitrary, as though God had no reason at all for appointing them, or that they are not suited to attain very happy and divine purposes in the grand scheme of his counsels; but they are arbitrary in this respect, that he might have chosen and appointed other positive commands or prohibitions, which might have been equally fit, and have attained purposes as happy and glorious, and which he might have introduced with equal reason: For it is very hard to suppose, as I hinted above, that every punctilio and all the little circumstances of every positive command and prohibition of God throughout all the ages of his church, patriarchal, Jewish and christian, were determined by the necessary superior fitness of them. I shall enquire immediately, whether any thing more than this can be said concerning his moral commands; and then what difference is there between the one and the other?

X. This scheme of the self-determining power of the will represents the doctrine of the freedom of man's will, and the power and prevalence of divine grace in a most happy harmony and consistency, perhaps beyond what any other scheme can represent. Suppose God decree and determine to convert such a sinner as Onesimus to faith and holiness: he can represent to his understanding, by his own word, and by the additional operation of his own Spirit, the fitness and goodness of faith in Christ, and true repentance, in such a superior light, as he who knows the hearts and sentiments, the circumstances and situations of all men, doth certainly foreknow will be not only sufficient but effectual to influence and persuade the will of Onesimus to comply with it: And yet perhaps God need not mechanically or physically, necessarily or irrisistibly move and constrain the will of the creature to comply. And though the will is left to its own free

agency and self-determining power, yet the light in which God sets the gospel before the eyes of the mind is so great, as will finally and certainly persuade the will, though not necessarily impel or constrain it. And the great God, who knows intimately the make and constitution of our natures, and our present situation, sees clearly that this light will be finally effectual to influence the will freely to comply with the proposals of grace. Thus the virtuous and pious actions of men are praise-worthy and rewardable, and approve themselves to their own consciences as well as to God, the righteous Governor and Judge; because the will had a natural self-determining power to chuse the contrary. And yet these good actions may be effectually secured as to their performance, by such a powerful representation of divine things to the understanding, as God foreknows will certainly, though not necessarily, be an occasion of the final free determination of the will to piety and virtue; and thus also the free favour or grace of God stands entitled to its due and divine honours.

It is the opinion of a considerable writer on this subject, that herein lies a great deal of the pleasure of a self-approving conscience, that the good man had a power to chuse an evil object or action, but he actually refused it, and chose the good. And herein God, as a Judge and Rewarder, shews his equity, in giving happiness to the man of virtue. Whereas if the divine power physically and irresistibly move and determine the will to chuse what is good, this would make the divine illumination of the mind needless, since the will might then be moved to chuse virtue without it: This, say some, would do violence to nature, would quite invert the method of treating free agents; and many other evil consequences are reckoned up by some authors. Now I would only enquire whether all these are not avoided by supposing the influence of the grace of God upon the soul of man to be only illuminative and persuasive, and yet finally efficacious and certain; which efficacy and certainty seem to be taught us by the express and evident language of several scriptures. Whether these scriptures do certainly imply an immediate and physical influence of divine power on the will, to give it a new general bias and inclination over and above this efficacious illumination of the mind, I leave to be determined by divines, always supposing it to be as effectual on the will, as if it were immediate, and the final event to be as certain.

If any person suggest here, that all the powers of the soul, viz. the will and affections, are grievously corrupted and perverted by the fall of man, and therefore there is need of an almighty physical or supernatural influence on them as well as on the understanding, in order to give a new bias, and change them to holiness; I would also suggest in my turn, and enquire, whether such a transcendent and supernatural illumination of the understanding may not be the proper and usual divine method of

something extrinsical? It is granted indeed, that the will sometimes borrows a reason for its determination from various occasions or arguments; Sometimes from very strong motives, and the transcendently superior fitnesses of things does but just appear superior; and sometimes itself determines its own choice between things in themselves indifferent, and where there is no superior fitness at all, or at least none that appears.

Yet let it be again observed here, as I have intimated before, that when two equal things are proposed to the will, there may be a very sufficient reason why it should determine its choice in general some way or other, though there be no sufficient reason in the things themselves for determining in this way rather than that. There is very sufficient reason why a hungry man should eat, when two equal pieces of bread lie before him; but he may chuse which piece he will eat, without any other reason than because he will. So there may be very sufficient reason why God should create a world; but if you ask why he should create this sort of world rather than another, and this sort of creatures rather than others, which may be equally fit, he borrows the reason for it only from himself; his own good pleasure is a sufficient reason: He doth it because he will; nor is any other reason necessary besides his own self-determining power. It is supremely fit he should do what he pleases. Why must the will of God be such a passive power as is not able to act of and from itself?

Objection III. This doctrine of liberty represents the will of an intelligent being as a sort of blind power determining itself without reason in many instances, acting without any motive, chusing and preferring one thing to another without any ground of choice or preference; whereas in all intelligent beings, whether God or man, there are no such blind principles of choice or action.

Answer I. It is granted indeed, that this doctrine does not ascribe understanding, or sight and perception to the will, for that would be to confound those two distinct powers or principles in a spirit: But this doctrine keeps those two powers of understanding and will in their proper characters; the understanding sees or perceives truth and falsehood, fitness and unfitness, good and evil, as far as any such characters or qualities appear, and the will freely determines and chuses after this perception, as it pleases. Generally indeed, and according to nature, the will receives direction for its own choice or determination from the perceptions of the understanding, where superior fitness or goodness appears: In an unwise being it does not certainly and constantly so chuse and determine: In a wise and good being it always chuses according to this appearing fitness. But where this superior f[illegible] [illegible]dness either is not, or does not appear,

hat can possibly remain, but that the will of the wisest being ust forbear to chuse, act and determine at all, or else it must etermine, chuse and act of itself and from itself.

Answer II. Let it be remembered here, what has been hint-d in some of the former sections, that though the understanding nd will are not improperly represented as two distinct powers of spirit, yet they are not two distinct beings or substances: It one and the same spirit, the same intelligent and rational being at both understands and wills, that perceives the fitness or oodness of things, and that generally acts or chuses accord-g to this perception: And therefore this one spirit, this ational being which has the determining power as well as e perceptive power, and which properly determines and chu-s as well as perceives, is no such blind agent as the objec-on represents.

And yet it must be acknowledged, that where the fitness or nfitness, the good or evil of things does not appear to this ra-onal being, or this spirit, where it can discover no superior fit-ess or goodness, there it must act by its own choice, and deter-ine itself as it pleases, when it has no other guide or rule for elf-determination: And the matter of fact in many instances is plain as not to be denied. When two cakes are set before a ungry man, in which no manner of difference appears either in e colour, situation, quantity or inviting qualities of them, it is deed his hunger is the motive which really determines him to at one of them; and it is a rational, and not a blind irrational action take one of these cakes and eat it. The man is guided by eason, so far as reason can possibly guide him. But when rea-on utterly ceases to guide or direct the man, because of the uality of the two cakes, there it must be merely the self-mov-g power or the will of this rational being which determines hich of the two cakes he shall eat, because there is no superior otive or reason to chuse one rather than the other. One might y the same concerning two new guineas, or new halfpence fered to our choice. In such a case, I plainly feel myself to etermine my own choice in and of myself, and I am conscious no superior motive, I know of nothing without me that makes e prefer one to the other: Now is it possible that I can be deter-ined by a superior motive or moral cause, of which I have no anner of knowledge, no consciousness, no idea? Is this a mo-ve? Is this suasion or moral casualty!

In this place I cannot forbear to cite what I have lately read pon my review of these essays, in the notes on Archbishop ing's Treatise on the Origin of Evil: *To argue still that some inute imperceptible causes, some particular circumstances in our wn bodies, or those about us, must determine even these seemingly ndifferent actions, is either running into the absurdity of making*

us act upon motives which we do not apprehend: or saying that we act mechanically, that is, do not act at all; And in the last place, to say, that we are determined to chuse any of these trifles just as we happen to fix our thoughts upon it in particular at the very instant of action, is either attributing all to the self-moving power of the mind, which is granting the question; or else referring us to the minute and imperceptible causes above-mentioned; or else obtruding upon us that idle unmeaning word chance *instead of a physical cause, which is saying nothing at all. How hard must men be pressed under an hypothesis, when they fly to such evasive shifts as these! How much easier and better would it be to give up all such unknown and unaccountable impulses, and own that both common sense and experience dictate an independent, free, self-moving principle, the true, the obvious, the only source of action?* page 165, edit. 1st.

Objection IV. But whatsoever may be said of the blind and arbitrary determinations of the will of man, without reason and without motive, surely it is not so with the great and blessed God; all his actions are wise, and fit, and good: His will always chuses and determines according to the fitness or unfitness of things: He never does any thing in an arbitrary manner, or by mere will and pleasure; and though we are at a loss to find out the superior fitness or unfitness of many things by which the divine will is determined to chuse or refuse, yet he who hath all the infinite ideas of things real and possible within the grasp of his understanding, can see those superior fitnesses or unfitnesses which are unsearchable to us, and he always determines and acts according to them: for infinite wisdom cannot act otherwise.

Answer. To guard against the charge of supposing the great God to act in an arbitrary manner, without good reason, and without fit motives, let it be again considered, what has been often hinted before, that God never decrees or acts in general without a just design and reason for it, and a proper end to be obtained by it: as for instance; if God determine to create rather than not to create, there was probably a reason for it taken from the consequences of creation which the blessed God designed, and had in his view: But when several distinct and different creatures or worlds appear in idea to his infinite understanding, in any of which there is no superior fitness, but which in themselves are equally fit, and by each of which, considered as means, he may equally obtain the same end, then he must chuse one of these means, that is, one of these worlds in particular, only by the determination of his own will: And if this be called sovereign and arbitrary conduct, it is still no more than the eternal nature of things requires, and it shews him to be a proper sovereign over all his creatures, and to have a complete

:edom of indifference or absolute choice in these his deter-
nations.

Objection V. Perhaps it will be objected here, that if two
ings are perfectly equal, and if the will of God or man deter-
ines itself to chuse one of them without a sufficient reason
ken from the things, to determine it, then it is determined by
ere chance or accident: Now it is very hard to suppose con-
rning any wise being, and especially concerning the all-wise
od, that in any instance of action he is determined by chance.

Answer. Chance is a word invented to signify the produc-
on of an effect in the corporeal world, whose cause we see not,
id for which we cannot account; then we say, it came by
ance, as though there was no cause of it. Chances or acci-
ents are such events as we see not the train of causes which
roduce them. But in the acts of the will there is nothing can
e ascribed to chance, for the will itself is the obvious cause of
s own determinations. The word chance always means some-
ing done without design. Chance and design stand in direct
pposition to each other; and consequently chance can never be
roperly applied to acts of the will, which is the spring of all de-
gn, and which designs to chuse whatsoever it doth chuse, whe-
ier there be any superior fitness in the thing it chuses or no;
nd it designs to determine itself to one thing where two things
erfectly equal are proposed, merely because it will. Nor can I
hink of any way to refute this doctrine which I have here pro-
osed, unless we could prove that amongst all the infinite medi-
ms which may appear to the human or the divine mind towards
he attainment of any proposed end, there are no two mediums
hat are equal, or which cannot be equally accommodated to
heir own purposes: And I think this is more than any man can
rove. But this introduces the last objection.

VI. If we may judge of things by the nicest observations
hat we can possibly make among all the beings we know or con-
erse with, there is no such thing in nature, nor ever was, as
wo things proposed to the will of God or man which are per-
ectly equal or indifferent, or wherein every circumstance was so
ntirely alike, that there is no reason for the will to incline to
ne side rather than the other. There is no such thing as two
eaves of a tree exactly alike; you may travel and search till
our feet and your eyes ache, and never find them. Even in
wo grains of sand, or two drops of milk or water, microscopes
will always shew you some difference; and therefore this doctrine
f two or more things perfectly equal is founded upon a mere
maginary supposition, and the hypothesis that is built upon it
annot stand.

Answer. What if there are no two leaves of trees, no two
grains of sand, *or drops* of water or milk perfectly alike, be-

cause they are all compounded bodies? Yet in two bodies perfectly simple, such as two pieces of solid matter without a pore, there may be perfect equality and likeness. And surely if not in fact, yet in the divine idea of possibles there may be many parts of matter perfectly like and equal. If we are allowed to talk of two distinct parts of time, or distinct parts of space in which the world might have been created, it must be confessed that these parts of space or time are perfectly alike, and consequently that the determination of the will of God to create the world in one of these parts of time or space rather than another, was entirely from his own will. If one would descend to the minute specific particles of which distinct bodies are composed, we should see abundant reason to believe there are thousands of such little particles or atoms of matter, which are perfectly equal and alike, and could give no distinct determination to the will of God where to place them. Is it not acknowledged by philosophers that the different kinds of bodies are made up of corpuscles, of different shapes and different sizes; but that each particular kind is made of similar corpuscles, and nearly equal also? Thus for instance, the particles of common water have some essential difference from the particles of oil, blood, quicksilver, animal or vegetable juices, and other liquids; but they are, in a great measure, if not universally, similar among themselves: Now if we consider the immense quantity of pure water which is in this world, and the innumerable small essential particles that compose it, is there not abundant reason to suppose that millions of these particles are equal and alike, rather than to imagine that God the Creator took special care that among the innumerable millions of these aqueous particles which he made in all the rivers and oceans in the world, there should not be two of them alike and equal; and yet that all of them should be so nearly equal, and so much alike, as to distinguish them from the particles of all other bodies?

We might use the same sort of reasoning concerning the particles that compose air, light, sun-beams, concerning earth, sand, stone and chalk, concerning grass, herbs, leaves and trees; the hair, skin, flesh and bones of animals, and all other specific particles of bodies whether solid or fluid, that compose this lower world: We might ascend to the sun, the vastest of all the bodies, and consider the infinite myriads of luminous or fiery particles which go to compose it, or which have been issuing from it every moment since its creation, and all these perhaps are vastly more in number than go to compose all the planets put together, and then enquire whether there are not two of all these particles exactly alike: This argument would run through the whole universe of the planetary worlds, with all their contents and inhabitants; and can we suppose that the Creator took

ch exact care as never to make two particles of any body per-
ctly equal and similar, and at the same time that he took care
make each of them so nearly equal and similar as to keep all
e particles of one species of bodies in shape and size sufficiently
stinct from the particles that compose every other species? He
at can suppose this, plainly appears to serve an hypothesis. It
evident enough that the objector's supposition, that there are
two things equal and alike, is only brought in to oppose this
ctrine which I have laid down, and that without any proof, or
deed probability: And the supposition that there are or may
a multitude of things which are entirely alike and equal, is
rtainly a possible thing, and vastly the more probable of the
o. If we had no proof of it, yet the various difficulties or
eming absurdities that press hard upon the contrary supposition,
z. *that no two things are equal, and that the will of God or
n is always determined by some superior fitness of things,*
ould incline one to renounce that hypothesis. These will be
presented at large in the next section.

Since the first edition of this book an ingenious friend has
opposed this objection, viz. *If God exerts his creating power,
hath some reason for it taken from the preferableness of the
istence of what he creates to its non-existence; otherwise he
uld never create at all.* To this I answer, This is more than
be proved, for the non-existence of that creature may be as
in itself as the existence of it; and God might have created
other being equally fit in the room of it, by the mere deter-
nation of his own will. My friend goes on, *If of two possible
ects equally fit to be chosen, he gives existence to one, leav-
the other in its non-existent state, the reason of his creating
t one is the absence of any good reason for creating of both.*
swer. It is possible there might be equal reason for the crea-
n of one or of both, that is, no reason at all in superior fit-
ss: but the existence of one rather than both may be entirely
ing to the will of God. Or suppose God was determined by
perior fitness to create one out of two possibles rather than
th, yet the existence or the non-existence of either of them
ne, may have equal fitness, though the existence of both
ould be supposed unfit. But how ready are we to lose and
nfound our thoughts in this abstract reasoning upon divine
as and decrees, which are indeed too high and too hard for us;
d it becomes us not to be too positive and presumptuous upon
her side of such sublime and abstruse reasonings.

CT. VII.—*The Difficulties that attend the contrary Scheme.*

When we enter into a narrow disquisition of the eternal
nsels of God, and the determinations of his will, perhaps we
ll find some difficulties pressing us on all sides, which cannot

be clearly and completely relieved by the understanding and reasoning powers of man, at least in this present state. I do not pretend that my set of sentiments is entirely free from all: But the chief difficulty is to find any scheme which has less or fewer than this which I have represented. Till I see that done, I think I must be content to abide where I am. It is possible I may meet with some new objections against mine, which I had not thought of before; but while every scheme has some hardships, I persuade myself that hypothesis may still be allowed to come nearest to the truth, which has the least and fewest difficulties attending it. But when the difficulties are many more and greater which hang upon any one human scheme than do upon another, we are naturally led to suppose that such a scheme can never be true, or at least that it is by no means so probable as the opposite. Let us then consider what will be the consequences of supposing that the divine will in all its determinations and decrees whatsoever, is universally, certainly and unalterably influenced by the superior fitness of things.

Difficulty I. Then there is nothing amongst all the works of God's creation, or his providence, or his government of creatures through time or eternity, left free to him with a liberty of choice or indifference, since this opinion supposes there is but one single train of fittest things, or one set of things supremely fit among all the millions of supposed possibles that come within the divine survey. Has it not been always said, and that with great truth and justice, that all creatures are contingent beings, and that they might not have been. But according to this supposition no creature existing is a contingent being, for its superior fitness made its existence necessary. And upon this hypothesis every atom in the creation, together with the shape of it, and the size and situation of it through the whole universe, every motion in the world of corporeal nature appointed by God, together with the times and periods, minutes and moments of every event, the least as well as the greatest, except those which are introduced by inferior spirits, are all eternally necessary, because they are the fittest that could be.

And I might add, they are as unchangeably necessary as the being of God himself, that is, with a consequential, if not with a simultaneous necessity; for at least from the very position of his essence and existence, all conceivable things, with all their infinite relations and their eternal fitnesses arise, and they all appear to his view: And the only one scheme of things which is most fit, is necessarily determined by him into existence and actual futurity, with all the minutest parts and appendices thereof, because he sees the superior fitness of them all: Thus the least appearance and event in the corporeal world throughout all the ages of creation and providence, is unalterably necessary,

if not equally necessary with God's own being. Let us see now how such a proposition would sound, and with what aspect such a scheme of things would appear to our minds, if we enter into the detail of them. Then God could not have abstained from making this our world at all, nor from making it just such as it is, nor withheld his hand from creation one moment longer: then he could not have made one more planet or star, or one less than he has done: nay, not so much as one atom or dust more or less in any star or planet, nor have placed them in any other form. He could not have given the sun one more beam, nor any morning since the creation one more gleam of light, or one less shade of darkness. Then the ever-blessed God could not have been happy one moment longer in solitude, or without creatures, nor begun to form any part of this universe, or this globe earlier or later than he did; nor could he have caused one spire of grass to grow on this earth, nor one drop of water in the sea, nor one sand more or less at the bottom of it. He could not continue the material world, nor any atom of it a moment longer in existence, nor have fixed the periods even of the minutest beings any otherwise than he has done. Not a drop of rain could fall, not a particle of water flow, nor a dusky atom of smoke ascend in any other manner, nor at any other minute than it doth; nor could the great God have decreed it otherwise in the least punctilio, so far as mere corporeal nature is concerned therein, because each of these was supremely fit, together with the original train of causes which necessarily produced them.

But if it be allowed, that in any of these minute and inconsiderable things, God may determine freely and merely by his own will without superior fitness, why may he not determine ten thousand other things, which seem to us of greater importance, merely by his own will without superior fitness? But on the contrary, if God cannot do any thing without the view of superior fitness, this difficulty will extend to the affairs of human nature also, and to the works of providence, redemption and grace, as well as to the inanimate world and God's creating influences. The Americans and the Hottentots could not have been formed otherwise than under such special disadvantages; nor could Great Britain have had the gospel withheld from it one moment longer. Nor indeed, according to this scheme, could God have withheld his Son from being sent to redeem the world, nor withheld his Spirit with all its gifts and influences from the inhabitants of this globe, nor have omitted any one miracle towards the propagation of this gospel; for the will of God was absolutely determined to do all this by its superior fitness.

What strange doctrine is this, contrary to all our ideas of

the dominion of God? Does it not destroy the glory of his liberty of choice, and take away from the Creator and Governor and Benefactor of the world, that most free and sovereign agent, all the glory of this sort of freedom? Does it not seem to make him a kind of intelligent instrument of eternal necessity, an almost mechanical medium of fate, and introduce Mr. Hobbes's doctrine of fatality and necessity into all things that God hath to do with? Doth it not seem to represent God as a being of vast understanding and consciousness, as well as of power and efficiency, but still to leave him without a will to chuse among all the objects within his view? In short, it seems to make the blessed God a sort of almighty minister of fate under its universal and supreme influence. Thus speaks the heathen stoic in a tragedy:

> "Quæ nexa suis currunt causis
> Non licet ipsum vertisse Jovem."—*Seneca.*
>
> "Thus causes run, a long connected train;
> Not Jove himself can break th' eternal chain."

And it was the professed sentiment of some of the ancients, that *fate was above the gods.*

Is it not abundantly better to suppose that among the infinite variety of possibles in the survey of the great God, there might be many schemes of grand design, and many mediums of accomplishment, both in the larger and minuter parts of them, which might be equally fit and proper? And that God by his own will determined which scheme he would chuse, and which medium he would make use of to bring it to pass? And that he made or rendered this particular scheme and these mediums become, if I may so express it, more fit and good, that is, pleasing and agreeable by his own chusing them? So a man, when he has once chosen for himself one thing out of many which he proposed to himself, and all which before appeared to him to be equally good, makes that which he has chosen particularly more agreeable and good to himself by his choice of it, and for ever after prefers it because his own will has actually chosen it: He delights in his own free choice.

Objection. *Perhaps it may be replied here, that even according to the scheme that I have proposed, all those things are allowed to be eternally and unchangeably necessary in which God beholds a superior fitness; and these perhaps are far more in number than those which have no such superior fitness, or which in themselves are equal and indifferent: And then it will follow that even in this scheme of mine, fatality is introduced into far the greatest parts of the works of God.** For

* Another objection is raised here. If there be any one thing to which God is influenced by superior fitness, this is fatality: and if such a fatality be

if there be the least degree of inequality in any two or more objects, the divine wisdom beholds it, and finds out the superior fitness, and is determined thereby; And then probably there are but few things left which have such a perfect equality in them, as to be the objects of free choice: All the rest is mere fate.

Answer. But to this I answer, That if we suppose no more than two different sorts of worlds to have had equal fitness in the divine view, before he chose to create one of them, together with the creatures and the inhabitants in them, then it follows that every creature and every circumstance of every creature in this one universe or world, which God has actually chosen and created, were all matters of indifference, and consequently were the object of his free choice: For though every creature in this universe, or the world which is now made, should be allowed to have a superior fitness with regard to the place it holds in this present universe, which is very improbable, and more than can be proved, yet I think we must own that every individual part or creature of this world, together with this world itself, once stood in the view of God as a matter of mere indifference, and an object of free choice, since another sort of world might have been created, with all its different parts, creatures or inhabitants. We might proceed further, and say the same concerning every single planet, and the creatures or inhabitants in it, and perhaps concerning every large spot of land, every mountain, every island, every sea and river in any of these planets, that they might have been altered as to some atoms or drops that compose them, though the other parts of that planetary world had been the same: And this reasonable supposition provides objects enough for the divine choice, and the freedom of the will of God to exert itself. We might also descend to much minuter parts of the creation, to every tree, and leaf, and flower, to every plant and animal, to every feather and hair of fowl and beast, as well as to the inanimate parts of any of these globes: There does not seem to be an absolute necessity that every minute part, and pore and fibre of every species and of every individual should be precisely what they now are, even though the chief part of

allowed in one thing why may it not in all? Or if one or a few such instances in God's works do not infer fatality, why should many or all infer it? Answer I. As we do not charge the doctrine of fatality on men upon a supposition of some of the volitions or actions of men to be determined necessarily, since the rest and greatest part are free, so neither can fatality be charged on God, since the chief and largest part of his actions ad extra are free also, as will appear further in what follows: II. Whatsoever ideas or propositions, whatsoever eternal truths, or rules of virtue may be necessary in the divine mind, yet there is not so much as the real existence of one creature necessary, and so fatality is utterly excluded; since all created beings are contingent till the will of God determine them into existence. See difficulty I. preceding. See also the answer to the objection in this very page.

the form of each of them were the same as it is: And this will still provide new objects for the choice of God, and his perfect liberty. Thus his actions of free choice in our world will be vastly more numerous than those to which he is any way determined by a superior fitness. Nay, every act of God and his determination of any or every circumstance relating to every creature in the present universe, will be an act of his free choice or liberty of indifference, if we allow, as I said before, but two general schemes of a creable universe to have been equally fit: even though every particular part of each universe were supposed to be necessary to its own whole, and therefore supremely fit in that particular universe, if language will allow such an expression. This doctrine therefore is so far from fatality in every part of it, that it makes every creature or existent being in the present natural world the object of God's free choice.

Difficulty II. According to this supposed scheme, that is, if one single thing be the only fittest, and if God be determined necessarily to this one thing, then the free grace and goodness of God, and the special thankfulness of man for his benefits, seem to be much diminished, and in some measure precluded: For in this view of things, God could not bestow one grain of favour more or less upon any creature than he hath done; nor could he have chosen any other object for the exercise of his mercy and goodness, either among the varieties of the animal or intellectual creatures than what he has chosen. And would not this take away a great part of my obligation to thankfulness for any of his benefits, and in some measure cancel my obligations to thank him for his choice of me to be the object of them, if I must believe that God could not have withheld these benefits from me, nor could have chosen any other object for those blessings which he has made me partaker of, nor given me a grain less of any good thing which I enjoy relating to this life or another? It is true, you will say, God has done me as much good as he could do, and therefore I am under the highest obligations to him: But let it be remembered also, if I may dare to express the consequence of this opinion, that he has made me as unhappy as he could make me, according to this scheme, and see whether this does not diminish or vacate a great part of this obligation.

Will not this destroy, or at least vastly abate the reasons of gratitude and love to God in those who receive his favours, when kings and slaves, rich men and beggars, strong men and cripples, creatures whose life is filled with pain and poverty, or whose whole period of life is affluence and ease, were distinguished only and necessarily by the superior fitness of their circumstances? What is there of free mercy in his disposal of benefits? What can we find of mercy in the decree or providence

of God, which distinguishes the happy from the miserable? What is it that raises them above the others, but that God was necessarily determined to divide these distinct portions to them all by the superior fitness of things? And have not Abraham the friend of God, David the King, Paul the apostle, Sir Isaac Newton the philosopher, Judas the traitor, Irus the cripple, Davus the slave, and Jack Adams the idiot, all equal reason of thankfulness to the free bounty of their Maker, since so far as he acted in their composition of mind or body, or in their original circumstances of life, he determined each in such a particular manner, because his own will was thus necessarily determined, and therefore he could not have done otherwise.

III. If there be but one such superior fitness among all the ends and means which are in the comprehensive survey of God, and if God be under an unalterable necessity of determining according to this superior fitness, thence it will follow that every thing possible is necessary, and every thing that is not necessary is impossible. There is scarce any real difference between things necessary, and things possible, even in the view of God himself, according to this scheme of all things being determined by supreme fitness. The difference is chiefly in our apprehension, by reason of our short-sighted views of things, who cannot discover this superior fitness. But in reality, and in the sight of God, according to this hypothesis, nothing is possible to be done by God himself but what hath this superior fitness, and that is always necessary, and must be done. And according to this opinion also, what is not necessary is really impossible, and can never come into existence, because it has not this superior fitness. In this way of thinking, there neither is, nor ever was a medium between the necessity of what is future, and the impossibility of that which is not future, since there is but one fittest means or end, and is necessarily future; but what is not fittest is for ever impossible, and always was so. Now does not this appear strange and incredible doctrine?

I know it will be objected here, that this way of talking confounds *metaphysical* necessity with *moral* necessity, which are very distinct things. A metaphysical necessity, say some, is a necessity arising from the essence or nature of things, and takes place only where the opposite implies a contradiction; so all the semi-diameters of a circle are necessarily equal, because it is inconsistent in the nature of things they should be unequal. But a moral necessity is that whereby a most wise being is necessarily led to chuse that which is best, or to act that which is fittest. Now in this view there is a wide difference, say they, betwixt things necessary and possible, that is, things that are metaphysically possible wherein there is no inconsistence in the nature of things, and such are ten thousand essences which yet shall never

exist: And this is very different from a thing which is morally necessary, that is, which an all-wise Being wills and chuses out of ten thousand supposed possibles, because of its superior fitness, even though divine wisdom cannot chuse otherwise. But to this I answer,

That in philosophical strictness and the truth of things, this *moral necessity and impossibility*, and this *metaphysical necessity and impossibility* will appear to be very near a-kin: And though there may be some difference between these two necessaries, viz. moral and metaphysical, as to the immediate and proxime cause and reason of their necessity, yet the necessity of both of them is a physical or natural necessity, they are both equally strong and unalterable, and the original cause and reason why both of them are necessary, lies in the very nature of things. I might say the same also concerning their impossibility: As for example; if the being A cannot possibly exist because it carries in it some ideas or properties which are naturally inconsistent, so neither can B possibly exist, because it doth not carry in it a superior fitness; since, according to this hypothesis, it is inconsistent with the nature of the all-wise God to make B exist, because it was not supremely fit; and it is inconsistent in the nature of things that B should ever come into existence, because it wanted one property necessary to the possibility of its existing, and that is supreme fitness: Thus from the very nature of God, and from the nature of things, it is impossible that B should ever exist. And how much does this differ from a natural or physical impossibility? Hence it appears, according to this hypothesis, that it was true from eternity that every thing was naturally impossible which had not in its nature this superior fitness; and if it had in its nature this superior fitness, then it was not only possible, but had a sort of natural necessity to exist, which was the thing I undertook to prove, and which is the difficulty under which this opinion still seems to labour, notwithstanding the offered distinction.

IV. Another difficulty that seems to bear hard upon this hypothesis, of *all things being determined by superior fitness*, is this, *viz.* Then there would be scarce any real difference between the *moral* and the *positive* laws of God. The one would be every whit as necessary as the other, both in themselves as laws, and with regard to God the law-giver: For if all the positive commands and institutions of God are given because he saw an antecedent fitness and goodness in them superior to any other commands that could be given at that time, and in those circumstances; and if all his moral commands are given upon the same reason, will it not follow that the positive laws are as necessary for *that time and those circumstances* as the moral laws are in *all* times and circumstances? I say, allowing this difference, that

he moral commands are necessary at all times and occasions, and he positive only on some particular occasions. And upon this ypothesis, it is no more in the power of God to have altered he positive commands on those particular occasions, than it is in is power to change the moral commands on any occasion whatever. Then every pin and tack in the tabernacle of Moses, very little punctilio and circumstance in all the Levitical rites of urification and sacrifice, every colour and thread which is of livine appointment in the curtains of the tabernacle, or the vestments of the priest, were as necessary at that time and place as he ten commands, or any rule of virtue and piety whatsover; since they did necessitate and determine the will of God o appoint them by his seeing a superior fitness and goodness in hem all. It is true indeed, we who are short-sighted creatures, nd cannot penetrate so far into the fitness and unfitness of things annot find out the positive commands of God by our reasoning, s we can many of the greater and more obvious moral laws; yet et it be observed also, that these moral laws in some of the esser branches of them, and in their application to particular ases, perhaps can hardly be found out by our short and feeble easonings; and in this respect the difference between moral and ositive laws would grow less and less, even with regard to us, ill in many instances the difference would vanish. But with regard to God himself, and in the nature of things, they would be oth equally necessary, and God could not appoint any of them therwise than he has done.

V. Then there would be no such thing as any liberty of hoice and indifference in the world, or at least only among imerfect intelligent beings who are endowed with wills, and that ut seldom too: And this very liberty would arise merely from heir imperfection, that is, because in some things they could not ind the superior fitness, since they cannot extend their knowedge deep and wide enough to see all the fitnesses and unfitesses of things. For according to this scheme, all the decrees nd actions of God the most perfect Spirit, about himself, or bout his creatures, would be ever necessary; and all the material creation, the whole universe of bodies, and every natual motion therein, so far as ordained by God even in their remotest causes, would be necessary from the beginning to he end of all things: And a very wise man who sees the itnesses of things, would have scarce any thing of this freelom, for he would be always necessarily determined in his choice y this superior fitness.

But let us think a little further on this point: If this opinion were true in the whole scheme, and all spirits, perfect or imperfect, were necessarily determined to act according as things appeared fit or unfit to the *mind*, and if these appearances were

the necessary result of the situation of man or other intelligent creatures, whether wise or unwise, among a variety of objects; then, I thing, there would be no freedom of choice, no liberty of indifference at all, no proper self-determining power, either in heaven or earth, either in God, angels, or men, but all would be one huge scheme of fatality both in the intellectual and material world.

Shall it be replied here, what? Is there no liberty of indifference to be found any where but where the objects are entirely equal? Have I not liberty of choice, when I chuse one house to dwell in, or prefer one piece of cloth to wear rather than another, because I find one better and fitter for my use than another? Does not all the world call this a liberty of choice, and proper freedom of the will, notwithstanding the superior qualifications or motives that inclined me to chuse this and refuse that?

I answer, and allow this to be a proper freedom or liberty of choice, supposing the will only to be directed and inclined by these motives, and not powerfully and necessarily determined by them. But if once we assert the will to be *necessarily determined* by these motives, then it has no proper self-determining power in these instances, and the very idea of proper liberty vanishes and is lost. And indeed what great difference will there be between matter and spirit, if both are determined to move or act only by external influences? Both would be inactive or incapable of self activity; but one would have a consciousness of its actions which the other has not. Is it not much better therefore to suppose, that the influence of motives in the understanding reaches no further than *to direct the will*, without a certain or necessary determination of it, wheresoever there are motives arising from superior fitness? And may we not reasonably conceive both in this universe, as well as in the world of possibles, that there are millions of objects wherein this superior fitness either is not, or does not appear; and here is still a larger space for the exercise of perfect freedom of choice, and wherein the will is determined by nothing but itself.

VI. It may be considered as another difficulty and hardship which would attend this opinion, that there are a great number of scriptures which would have a most absurd sound, if they were to be interpreted upon this foot, viz. *the necessary determination of the will of God in every thing by the antecedent and superior fitness of things.* There is no act of providence or grace which the scripture represents as a free favour of the blessed God, but would be hereby made necessary, and God would be limited to that one object and that one action. Let us consider a few particulars:

Numb. iv. 37. Moses saith to the Israelites, *Because he*

ed thy fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, therefore he se their seed after them: But in truth, according to this doc-ie, he loved them because they were the fittest for his love, and d could not do otherwise; and he chose them and their seed, ause he could make no other choice. Deut. xxi. 5. *The sts the sons of Levi, the Lord thy God hath chosen to minister o him;* that is, because he saw such a superior fitness in the s of Levi, that he could not chuse any other tribe. 1 Sam. 24. *God chose Saul to make him a king,* but he was de-nined to it by the superior fitness of this choice. Ps. cxxxii. *The Lord hath chosen Sion, he hath desired it for his itation;* that is, because he saw it so fit, that he could not se any other dwelling in that age. 1 Cor. i. 27. *God hath sen the foolish things of this world, and the weak things, and igs that are despised.* It is true, he gives a reason for it, viz. *he might confound the wise,* &c. but then it is plain, he could have chosen the wise, the mighty and the honourable. 'hess. ii. 13. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to ation;* that is, because it was supremely fit, that he could pass you by without chusing you. How frequent is the ex-ssion in scripture of God's chusing this or that person or ig, this or that family or nation, for particular purposes in providence and grace? And it is represented still as a ter of free favour: But according to this interpretation, there o true liberty of choice or free mercy in all these things, since e was such a superior fitness on that side, that it was not pos-e for God to have determined or chose otherwise.

But let us proceed to some other texts. Eph. ii. 4. *God is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,— h quickened us together with Christ:* But according to this nion, he could not possibly have loved the Ephesians less n he did, nor let them go on in their death of trespasses and without quickening grace. 1 Tim. i. 10. *I was before a phemer and a persecutor,* saith St. Paul, *but I obtained cy—and the grace of God, was exceeding abundant.* But opinion would interpret the words, that God could not with-l mercy from me, and therefore I obtained it: *and the grace God was exceeding abundant to me,* because it was not possible hould have been less. Rom. ix. 23, 24. *That he might be known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy— of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles:* But this nion obscures these riches of glorious grace, by shewing that l could chuse no other vessels of mercy but the Jews of old e, and the Gentiles afterward, and in that proportion in which chose them. Rom. x. 20. *Isaiah grows very bold and saith, as found of them that sought me not;* that is, God was ne-arily determined by the superior and antecedent fitness of gs *to be found of those* who never sought him.

And if we read the whole ninth chapter to the Romans, we find God is there represented as making a distinction of mercy between Isaac and Ishmael, between Jacob and Esau, between the Jews and Gentiles, first in favour of the Jews, and afterwards rejecting the Jews, and receiving the Gentiles. Let these texts be construed in what sense you please with regard to persons, or families, or nations, or with regard to temporal, spiritual, or eternal blessings, still all are represented by the apostle as instances of God's sovereign goodness and special mercy, in the free choice of some, and the neglecting of others. But according to this opinion, there is no such thing as liberty of choice or indifference with God in any of these actions; for he could have acted no otherwise than he did in any one punctilio of grace or providence: His will was necessarily determined as to all his benefits of every kind, and to the persons who were objects of them, by antecedent superior fitness, so that he could not have bestowed nor withheld these blessings in any other manner than he has withheld or bestowed them.

I grant always, and have always granted, that wheresoever there is such an antecedent superior fitness of things, God acts according to it, so as never to contradict it; and particularly in all his judicial proceedings as a Governor and Distributer of rewards and punishments, he has a constant regard to vice and virtue, to superior fitness and unfitness, though he may reward or rather bestow beyond our merit, or he may punish less. And even in acts of mere bounty and free goodness, we must always grant and suppose him never to act what is not fit. Yet we may also suppose, when we consider God as a Benefactor, that in his infinite survey of things, there may be a thousand equally fit objects for his goodness, and a thousand equal ways of manifesting it. Now this reasonable supposition leaves him a very large field for the exercise of his sovereign goodness and pleasure, and the free determinations of his will and choice, both as to the blessings which he bestows, and the persons or nations on whom he bestows them.

Let us take one further step, and shew that even the grace of God in sending his own Son to redeem us, is much obscured by this opinion of the constant determination of the will of God by some superior fitness; John iii. 16. *God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life*; that is, according to this opinion, *God so* greatly *loved the world* of mankind because he saw it antecedently most fit for his love, and therefore could not love it less; and *he gave his only begotten Son*, because he saw it so supremely fit, that he could not withhold him; and he made this covenant of grace and proposal of salvation, *that whosoever believeth in him* should not *perish*, because this proposal

was so supremely fit also, that it was not possible for him to make any other covenant or any other proposal of salvation. Verse 17. *God sent not his Son to condemn the world*, that is, because he saw it unfit that he should do so, and therefore he could not have sent his Son on this dreadful errand. Romans v. 8. *God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were—sinners, Christ died for us*; but according to this doctrine he was so necessarily determined to give this particular instance of love to sinners, and to save them in this manner, that he could not have refused to give his Son to die for them. What contrary turns would this sort of philosophy give to this most divine instance of free and rich mercy in all the bible?

Give me leave at the end of this catalogue of scriptures, to cite two or three which represent to us in a more express manner, that the will of God often determines itself without such a supposition of superior fitnesses, that he may display his own godhead, and the independence of his actions. Rom. ix. 15. cited from Exod. xxxiii. 19. *I will make all my goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before thee: and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will shew mercy on whom I will shew mercy.* Now, as the name of the Lord is, *I am what I am, or I will be what I will be*; Exod. iii. 14. so his correspondent character in matters of pure grace and bounty is, *I will do what I will do*; that is, the will of God in matters of mere bounty is a self-governing principle, and is determined only by itself in his most free and sovereign instances of grace and blessing; he hath no other determination but what arises from within himself, even the good pleasure of his own will.

How often is this thought repeated in the word of God? How frequently is this given as the only reason of his conduct, in his works of creation, and in his distributions of blessings in the kingdom of providence and the kingdom of grace? Mat. xi. 26. *Even so, Father, because it pleased thee.* Rev. iv. 11. *Thou hast created all things, O Lord, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.* Isa. xlvi. 9, 10. *I am God, and none else —I will do all my pleasure.* Mat. xx. 14, 15. *Is it not lawful for me to do what I will with my own? I will give to this last even as unto thee.* Rom. ix. 18. *He hath mercy on whom he will.*—The blessed God, considered as a Creator and as a Benefactor, *worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will*; in a thousand instances his own will is his counsellor: He acts *according to the good pleasure of his will which he hath purposed within himself*; Eph. i. 5, 9, 11.

And here let me conclude with the words of St. Paul, Rom. xi. 36, 39. who, when he had been tracing out the methods of the conduct of God towards the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, leaves the springs and reasons of them all entirely within himself, and

adores the great Incomprehensible; *How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! Of him, and by him, and for him are all things; to whom be glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

THE

SACRIFICE OF CHRIST,

AND THE

OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT,

&c.

PREFACE

TO "THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST," &c.

THE author of these papers has been often grieved to see such a new sort of christianity published and propagated in the world, as leaves out *the propitiatory sacrifice of our blessed Saviour, and the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit*, which in his esteem are two of the chief glories of the gospel. He humbly hopes it was a sincere zeal for those momentous truths that set his pen to work, and a just sense of the influence which these truths have upon almost all that piety and virtue, which can be called christian.

He leaves it to more learned writers to manage this controversy in a way of strict and regular dispute. He hath chosen this manner of publishing his sentiments, with some hope that they may be better accepted by those who stand in most need of them, and particularly by the polite readers of the age, who seek something to entertain, as well as to instruct and profit. If there are any sudden starts of thought found here out of place, any abrupt sentences or paragraphs without that logical method or exact connexion, which would be expected in a set discourse; let it be remembered that this book is but a sort of *conversation-piece* among a few private friends, who pretend not to theological accuracies.

As to the names introduced in this conversation, they are not designed to represent any particular person living: But if any of my readers should find their own principles and their character described under the sentiments of Agrippa or Cavenor, the author entreats them to believe that they are the persons for whose sake he took this pains, and he begs the favour of them to read without prejudice or partiality, and with a temper of mind suited to the weight and dignity of the subject, and that they would make scripture their only judge of truth and error in this debate. And may the good Spirit of God render this little discourse useful to put some stop to the growth of these dangerous opinions, to recover those who are fallen into error, and to establish others who are wavering in such important points of the christian faith.

THE SACRIFICE OF CHRIST,

AND THE

OPERATIONS OF THE SPIRIT, &c.

I.—*The Introduction; or, Agrippa's Creed recited and opposed.*

ıere no other way to defend christianity, saith Paulinus to iends, is there no other way to refute the cavils of the deist, y yielding up the peculiar glories of the gospel? Can it be vindicated as divine, unless we reduce it almost to the dictates of the light of nature, with Jesus Christ set at the of them only as *a great prophet?* Many a doubter is not so far from christianity as to deny the facts on which our religion depends; and they will allow that the christian on in general is supported by these facts, which have been ered down to us by a notorious and incontestable manner of nce: But the special and important doctrines of this religion, as the *sacrifice of Christ as a proper atonement for sin, and nctification by the Holy Spirit*, which are taught so frely and so expressly in the new Testament, carry something m so disgustful, not only to the relish of our modern infidels, ıeral, but also to the prejudices of some who profess chrisy, that they would fain evade these truths, and quit them- of them by such a construction as really destroys them. ıpa is a christian of this stamp, a gentleman, as I am told, considerable estate; but it is said, he makes a shining when he appears in company. A few weeks ago I saw a ıe of his gospel, and was informed it is the general sense of of his acquaintance both in town and country. I have ıaper here, and he expresses his creed in the following :

'When the gentile nations had lost the knowledge of the God and his worship, and buried it under an immense load perstitious follies; when they had banished a great part of lity from their minds as well as their practice, the blessed thought proper to send his own Son from heaven to restore When the Jews, who were a people favoured with many revelations, had turned their religion into superstition, by g upon the mere ceremonies of it with the neglect of moral s and inward piety, God determines this great reformer l be of their nation. When the whole world of mankind rown thus horribly degenerate, it pleased God to send this

most glorious person Jesus Christ into this world with peculiar commission to restore the religion of nature, the knowledge of the one true God and his spiritual worship, instead of a load of ceremonies, whether human or divine, and to teach the nations true virtue and piety without superstition : He was sent to assure of the pardon of their sins upon repentance, which indeed they knew before, or their reason might have taught them, but not quite so clearly, and to tell them that after death men should be called to account for their behaviour in this life, and that a future state of long misery should attend the wicked, and a fair and lasting scene of happiness was provided for those who were virtuous. This inded, saith he, reason teaches us too, but the gospel superadds the resurrection of the body.

"And further, that this glorious person coming into the world for the reformation of it when it was so dreadfully corrupted, and preaching in opposition to the gross errors and iniquities of the age, it could not be expected that he should escape their rage and malice: Thus he was condemned by the Jews, and crucified by the Romans. This death of Christ on the cross was a noble testimony which he gave as a martyr to the doctrines which he preached ; and it is dignified after the Jewish and eastern manner with grand expressions in the New Testament, and represented in many sacrificial phrases, of which the Jews were extremely fond, such as *redeeming us by his blood, and making atonement for sin, &c.* because by his death he vindicated and sealed that doctrine, which taught the assured pardon of sin upon repentance, and the recovery of sinners by new obedience to the favour of God and eternal life. Before he left the world he appointed two ceremonies, viz. *baptism and the Lord's-supper!* the first by washing with water to represent to us that we must be washed from our sins, that is, we must repent and be reformed, and live a new life if ever we would be pardoned and saved ; and the second by eating bread and drinking wine, to put us in mind that Jesus Christ the Reformer of the world died in vindication of this doctrine of pardon of sin upon repentance, and to confirm the discoveries of this mercy to sinful men. After this he rose again from the dead, gave his twelve chief disciples a little further instruction about propagating this general reformation ; then he ascended to heaven, to intercede for men, and to rule over them, and afterward furnished the apostles with miraculous powers, on purpose to awaken the attention of the world to the rules of virtue and goodness, which they should teach them in the name of Jesus their Master : And therefore we are said, in the New Testament, to be sanctified by the Holy Spirit, because the miracles wrought, by the gifts of the Spirit roused a stupid world into consideration, and also did something toward the confirmation of those truths which mankind were exhorted to consider in order to their reformation and salvation.

He concludes his paper thus: "Now if any man has any ıer creed made up of notions and mysteries which goes beyond l this, I affirm that he draws more out of his bible than God er put into it; and though I will never be angry with him, ys Agrippa, for believing more than I, yet I cannot but laugh him for a strong believer: I dare pronounce boldly he is not ıt of my religion, nor can I be of his; and if he thinks me ıt almost a christian, I think him gone as much beyond ristianity?"

Paulinus was a gentleman of piety and great zeal for the spel of Christ. He lived far in the country, and was much ıired from the world. Though he held some acquaintance with tics and learned authors, yet he read his bible with more con- ıncy and application, and learned his religion thence. He was etty well versed in the writings of St. Paul, but he had heard known very little of Agrippa or his sentiments till last March: ıen he came to London, which he had not seen for ten or twelve ars before, and happened to get a sight of this new creed. As ɔn as he had read it, he was much surprised and concerned ıt any man who professed himself a christian should lose so ıch of his faith; but was much more grieved when he found, further conversation, that this was the christianity which was w growing in vogue; and upon his repetition of this creed in npany, he repeated his concern and zeal.

Must then, said he, the glorious gospel of our blessed viour be narrowed and curtailed at this rate, and reduced nost to the mere religion of nature? I acknowledge indeed, d I glory in it, that the gospel which I find in the New Testa- ınt contains every article of natural religion, and includes in it ery thing that reason can teach us about God or virtue. The ın who renounces any one point of the religion of reason, so renounces christianity also; for the doctrine of the blessed sus comprehends every part of it, and confirms it for ever. ıt when the light of nature and reason, in this fallen and dege- rate state, had appeared by the long and painful experiments so many ages and nations, to be ineffectual to reform, to sanc- y and save a vicious world, was not the glorious gospel of Christ ɔught in to do that for us which the light of reason and nature ıld not do? Was it not made manifest enough by the jargon and ld opinions of the philosophers that *the world by wisdom knew t God*, nor the right way to recover his favour or his image? And ıs it not upon this view that God sent his apostles with the mes- ge of a crucified Christ, and with that doctrine which *the Greeks lled foolishness*, to save the poor and the humble believer? 'as not the Son of God sent into this world *to be the Saviour* of ıful men? And was he ordained to save them only by teach- g them over again the doctrines which philosophy or reason

teaches? No surely: These doctrines were made originally for innocent man, and were found insufficient to restore him after his fall. But Christ was sent, if we will believe the gospel, to do that for us *which the law and light of nature could not do, in that it was weak through our flesh, that is, through our incapacity of fulfilling it:* He was sent down to die and be sacrificed for the sins of men, that is, to ransom or redeem men, who by their sins had deserved death, and to turn their sinful or vicious hearts to the love of God and holiness, by the enlightening and persuasive influences and effectual operations of his Holy Spirit, to lead them not only into the belief and practice of the natural law of God, but also to teach them some new doctrines and duties, such as *faith in the blood of Christ;* Rom. iii. 25. *Seeking justification before God not by any law of works, but by the righteousness or obedience and death of Christ;* Gal. iii. 11—14. Rom. v. 9, 10, 18, 19. *Love and obedience to Christ as our Lord and Saviour;* John xiv. 15. Heb. v. 9. *Praying for the Spirit of God to enlighten, renew and sanctify us, and to help us in our addresses to God and every duty;* John iii. 5, 6. Luke xi. 1—13. Rom. viii. 26. *Love to our enemies by the example of Christ, and hope of the resurrection of the body and eternal life through his death and rising again, and his everlasting intercession;* Rom. viii. 11, 34. 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. Heb. vii. 25. These are articles which the light of nature knows nothing of, and which shall certainly issue in the salvation of those who believe and practise them. Thus spake Paulinus in the company of some of his friends. Cavenor and Ferventio were both present; the former had lately imbibed the opinions of Agrippa secretly, but amidst his new doctrines he found some doubtings still, and was solicitous and cautious about his salvation: Ferventio was a mortal enemy to these opinions, and maintained the common articles of faith with a warm and vehement zeal. There was another man in company, one Charistes, a hearty christian, and a person of known moderation in religious disputes: Ferventio had little knowledge of him indeed, but he lived most times in Paulinus's house, and was much in esteem with Cavenor.

I am sorry, says Charistes, that such a sort of new christianity as Agrippa's creed should ever prevail among us. Aye, says Ferventio, with anger in his looks, it is sad indeed, for our old religion is quite spoiled by it and destroyed. Why should either of you be sorry or angry, answered Cavenor, if this should appear to be truth, though it has not been the current sentiment of our fathers? Pray, good Paulinus, now you have told us your own belief, tell us what you would say to such a man as Agrippa, to make it evident to his reason, that your creed is the true religion taught by [illegible] and his apostles, and that his

not so? Alas, replied Paulinus with a little warmth, what can
: said to a man who will not believe his own eyes and ears? A
an who hears and reads so many glorious expressions scattered
roughout the gospels and epistles, which dictate to him the
ecial and peculiar lessons of christianity, and yet will not re-
ive them? Does not the New Testament speak in most ex-
ess language, and that very frequently *of the propitiation of
hrist for our sins?* Must this blessed doctrine of grace be
tirely left out of the last and most perfect edition of a gospel
ade for sinners, though it was put into all the foregoing edi-
ons of it in emblem, and was foretold and prefigured by all
rmer dispensations? Is it not held forth to a guilty world by
e sacrifices which attended every dispensation of grace till
hrist came? And is not the *Lord's-supper* an appointed me-
orial of it under the dispensation of Christ? And must Agrippa
ake a new religion for us, by banishing this important article,
hich has been exhibited and continued in every religion that
od has made?

Where is the doctrine of *justification by faith in the name
f Christ, or forgiveness through faith in his blood*, to be found
n Agrippa's creed? Must this be all construed into justification
y those good works which the law of nature required us to per-
orm, and which the Son of God came from heaven only to set
n a fairer light, and which St. Paul often assures us, can never
ustify us before God? Must the regeneration, renovation and
anctification of our souls, by the Holy Spirit, signify nothing
lse than the change of our inclinations from vice to virtue, by
our own mere consideration of those truths in which Christ in-
structs us as a great Restorer of natural religion, and which
were confirmed by the miraculous powers of the Holy Spirit?
Is this all the meaning of those plain expressions, *justified by
the blood of Christ and sanctified by the Spirit?* Do we be-
lieve the New Testament is from God? Why then do we not
believe the articles which this divine book teaches us in such
plain and express words? Why do we strain and torture the
sacred language to make it speak things so different from its own
sense? Is it worth while for our ministers to be at all this pains
in the pulpit and the study, by the printing-press and by private
conversation, to defend the New Testament from the insults, the
cavils and clamours of infidels, if it teaches us so little beyond
what the light of nature teaches? Or have we so much to ex-
pect, or so much to fear from the deists, that some of us, who
are called christians, should be at so much labour to pervert the
glorious truths of the New Testament to their taste, and to drop
those which they do not like? Have we any good and sufficient
reason to subdue the words of Christ and his apostles down
to the meaning and sense of infidels, or to be so solicitous to

ingratiate those divine doctrines with unbelievers, by reducing them to such a similitude to their opinions, and sinking them almost down to their size and dimensions? Can we ever expect thanks from our blessed Lord in the great day for this sort of service?

For my part, I am fully persuaded, that the books, which have been written in vindication of the atonement of Christ in the two last centuries, carry such abundant force and evidence in them, that they can never be answered. Let Agrippa try to refute some of the chief discourses which have been published in former years by protestant divines on this subject: Let him destroy all the arguments used by Dr. Owen, Dr. Bates, and Dr. Edwards in their writings on this theme, and in confutation of the Socinian tenets: Let him give an effectual answer to the first part of *Truman's Great Propitiation*, to Bishop Stillingfleet, or Archbishop Tillotson's writings on the sacrifice of Christ, and several others, before he grow to such an assurance of his sentiments. I will not pretend to run over all this controversy again, nor have I any of these authors at hand, being absent from my study. Yet if I were within reach of Agrippa, I would put into his hands a few such questions as these, which my own thoughts and my memory suggested to me since I first read his creed: A deep concern for such an important truth hung about my soul, and set my pen at work in these queries.

Pray, Paulinus, let us be favoured with the rehearsal of them, says Cavenor, in great haste; the rest repeated the same request, and Paulinus began to read.

SECT. II.—*Queries to prove the doctrines denied by Agrippa.*

I. Does not St. Paul appear to be a man of good sense by all his writings? But surely Agrippa's explication of his epistles, supposes him to be one of the most strange, odd, irrational writers that ever used a pen. What? Has the christian religion so little in it beyond the restoration of the religion of nature? And could not Paul teach the restoration of natural religion but in such very improper terms, and such foreign and distant language, as that wherein he represents the gospel of Christ? Is this his plainest and his clearest manner of instructing the heathen world in the religion of nature, or of restoring it where it was lost, to tell them, they must be *reconciled to God by the death or blood of Christ*, that he has *made peace by the blood of his cross*, that *Christ crucified is the wisdom and power of God unto and for the salvation of men?* that *he died for our offences*, that he *gave himself a ransom for men*, that *God has set him forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood*, that we must *trust in his name*, that we *must be justified by his blood and by faith in him*, that by the obedience of one *many shall be made*

ghteous, that *by his own blood he obtained eternal redemption r us;* that the *blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit ered himself without spot to God, should purge our consciences om dead works,* that is, from works deserving death; and that *hrist appeared in the end of the world, to put away sin by the crifice of himself?* And do St. Peter and St. John, whom I ppose Agrippa acknowledges to be inspired writers, intend thing more than the same plain doctrines and dictates of natural ason, when they teach the great truths of the gospel in the me strange language, when they tell us that "Christ suffered, e just for the unjust, to bring us to God;" 1 Pet. iii. 18. that he bare our sins in his own body on the tree;" 1 Pet. 24. "that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses us from all sin;" John i. 7. "that he is a propitiation for our sins;" 1 John ii. 2. that he hath loved us and washed us from our sins in his own ood;" Rev. i. 5. and that "by his blood he hath redeemed us God;" chapter v. 9. And did our blessed Lord himself design nothing but to restore the religion of nature, when he told e Jews, that "the good Shepherd laid down his life for the eep;" John x. 11. that "the Son of man came to give his e a ransom for many;" Mat. xx. 28. that "they must eat s flesh and drink his blood if they would have eternal life;" ohn vi. 53—58. for "his flesh was that bread which he gave r the life of the world, and his blood is drank indeed: that his ody was broken and his blood shed for the remission of their ns;" Mat. xxvi. 28. 1 Cor. xi. 24. Did ever men teach the lain dictates of reason or the law of nature concerning our duty God and one another, and our hopes of his acceptance, in ich dark and distant language? And could they ever desire or xpect their hearers should understand them, and should by this reaching be taught to build their hopes of eternal happiness pon the belief and practice of natural religion? Are such persons as these the fittest to make divine messengers to truth and uty of an ignorant world, and to guard them against all superstitious fancies and erroneous conceits about divine things? I uppose, or may guess there are many things will be said by ome of the friends of Agrippa to reconcile the readers of the ew Testament to his absurd and perverted sense of it. As

First, That when our Saviour tells the Jews; John vi. 54. at they "must eat his flesh and drink his blood if they would ave eternal life," he only imitates the manner of the oriental ations, and the style of the Jewish writers, while his design is erely to invite them to receive his doctrine and become his disiples; for it was their ancient custom to represent wisdom and nowledge, as the food of the soul; Prov. ix. 5. "Wisdom rieth in the streets, come, eat of my bread and drink of the ine which I have mingled. Philo the Jew often speaks of pru-

dence, wisdom and virtue as that spiritual meat and drink which nourisheth the soul. But to this I answer,

That though the wise men among the Jews represent knowledge as the meat and drink of the soul, and invite their disciples to feed upon wisdom or to drink in their precepts of virtue yet is it the way of their doctors to represent their own flesh a the meat of souls, or their own blood as proper drink for them Do they ever say, that "their flesh is living bread, which they give for the life of the world?" Do they ever tell their disciples that "their flesh is meat indeed, or their blood drink indeed?" Do they pronounce, "if ye eat not my flesh, and drink not my blood, ye have no life in you?" Or do they promise, "he that eateth me shall live by me?" Did you ever read such language among the divine prophets of the Jews? Could it ever be said, except ye eat the flesh of Isaiah, or drink Jeremiah' blood, ye have no life? Were the Jews ever invited to feed upon the flesh of Moses or Elias, the founder or the restorer of their religion, or to drink the blood of Daniel or David? From all this I think I may infer, that though our Saviour's words may include a receiving of his instruction as a divine prophet or teacher, yet in these strong expressions he designs something more than merely an invitation to hear and receive the lessons of wisdom and virtue which he teaches. And since these expressions of our Saviour concerning eating his flesh and drinking his blood, sound very harsh and absurd in the literal sense of them we must then seek out the plainest and truest figurative sense Now this is very near at hand, and might be obvious to those among them who had read the Jewish prophets with care When he tells them that the *living bread is his flesh which he gives for the life of the world*; John vi. 51. it gives an intimation that his flesh or body was to be broken and die as a proper sacrifice of atonement for our guilt, which deserved death which was not proper to be spoken too publicly and plainly in his life time: And further, that *his blood was to be shed for the remission of our sins*, and to procure life for us: And that we must not only receive his doctrine, but we must trust in his atonement for our remission, and feed upon this sacrifice by faith, as the Jews eat part of their sacrifices; and that we must live upon it by trusting therein*. And since the Messiah was foretold to

* Objection. Does not our Lord expressly say, "except ye eat my flesh and drink my blood, there is no life in you?" But if faith in his blood, or trusting in his atoning sacrifice, was not necessary to salvation in that day, as I suppose will be readily granted, then eating his flesh in that day could never signify trusting in his atoning sacrifice. To this I answer, That Christ having promised to "give his flesh for the life of the world;" verse 57. promised therein to make his flesh a sacrifice "to take away sin" and to give life to the world, and intimated also that when this was done, and when he should be preached to men under this character of a sin-offering, then eating and drinking his flesh and blood, or faith in his sacrifice, would be required in order to spiritual and eter

: made an offering for sin by the prophets, and since feeding ›on sin-offerings was common to the Jewish religion; Lev. vi. ;, 26. the thoughtful hearers might arrive at something of the nse and meaning of our Saviour in this figurative language. ut suppose the Jews, when he first spake it, could not well nderstand him, consider they had abused his person, and de-ded his doctrine, and having so far rejected the light, they de-rved to be left in darkness, amidst figures and parables as hrist himself declares; Mark iv. 11, 12.

I add yet further, there are several things which Christ in s life-time spake in prophetic or parabolic language, for this ason, as I hinted before, that they were not fit and proper to : spoken too plainly at that season; but he left the expressions be explained by the events. The death of Christ, which was ›t far off, and the ministry of the apostles quickly afterward presenting his death *as a propitiation for our sins*, give us a ain clue to lead us into the sense of Christ in these figurative prophetic speeches, all which are so happily accommodable to ese ideas and doctrines of Christ's atonement for sin, and our ith therein, as gives much satisfaction to the thinking reader, at they were designed and intended hereby.

I confess indeed the papists are mistaken, when they imagine is discourse of our Saviour directly regards *the Lord's-supper*, ıd their idle and absurd doctrine of transubstantiation; yet ese speeches of his were greatly explained to his disciples even :fore his death, when he appointed *bread to be broken* as an nblem of his flesh which was wounded for us, and *wine* which as *poured into the cup* to be an emblem of his blood shed for us, ıd required us to eat and drink this bread and wine, as repre-ntatives of his death, and of our communion and participation ' the blessings of it, by faith or dependance on him. All this natural and easy. But if we sink these expressions into grippa's sense, of a mere receiving the doctrine of Christ,

l life. Our Saviour foretelling and describing in figurative language his bloody ath, which was to make atonement for sin, foretels and describes also that faith him which should then be esteemed necessary to salvation, under those figures eating his flesh and drinking his blood. I grant the expressions are in the esent tense, but this is frequent in the prophetic language when future things e designed. But till this event should be accomplished, and this doctrine ore plainly preached to men, a general trust in the person of Christ for all the nefits which are to be derived from him, may be represented by eating and inking, as all that was needful and sufficient to make men spiritually alive : ıd let it be observed that even this amounts to something more than mere re-iving his doctrine, for it is a feeding or living upon him and trusting in his rson as an all-sufficient Saviour, and a vital union with him, as our body lives r our food being united to us. All this answer may be reduced to a shorter mpass by explaining the words of Christ thus: "Except ye are made partak-ers of my atoning sacrifice, or sin-offering, by trusting therein so far as it is ridently revealed and preached to the world, whether in a more or less explicit ıanner, ye have no spiritual nor eternal life in you.

without any thing of an atoning sacrifice intimated therein, this will make hard figures and metaphors indeed, and strain and pervert the words into such a far-fetched and distant meaning, as they are not, nor ever were, suited to convey to any person who reads or hears them. Thus much I thought proper to say in vindication of the expressions of Christ himself.

But secondly, perhaps Agrippa and his friends will tell us concerning the apostles, as well as concerning their Master, that this sort of sacrificial and atoning language being used by some of the Jewish prophets in their inspired raptures, concerning the Messiah, the first preachers of christianity might imitate them; and it is well known they sometimes dealt in very far-fetched metaphors. You read, say they, what Daniel speaks, that *the Messiah should be cut off, but not for himself; that he comes to finish transgression, to make an end of sin, and make reconciliation for iniquity;* Dan. ix. 24—26. and Isaiah in chapter liii. 5—10. especially abounds in this sort of prophetical language concerning the Messiah; *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed: His soul was made an offering for sin when it pleased the Lord to bruise him, and put him to grief, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all.* It is no wonder now, say they, that Christ and his apostles should repeat such language as this, when they speak of the death of the Messiah, since the prophets, by their rapturous and timid style, had made this sort of language familiar and natural to them.

It is granted, Agrippa, that this language was as it were made natural and easy to the great Founder and first preachers of christianity, by so much use of them in the prophetical writings: But this does not at all prove that these expressions are not used in their natural sense, but rather confirms the plain and obvious sense of the words, since both the prophets, and their interpreters the apostles use the same. For suppose the prophets had used such strange phrases as these, in the midst of their raptures, to signify the Messiah's restoring of natural religion, and dying as a martyr for it, could St. Paul and his brethren use no clearer form of speech to instruct us in the true meaning of the prophets, and the business of the Messiah, than by repeating the same sort of sacrificial phrases again and again? And would neither he nor they ever once tell us, that though they use this sort of sacrificial language, they mean no more by it than Agrippa does? Were Paul, Peter and John proper interpreters to be sent into the world, and particularly to the Gentile nations, to explain the words of the Jewish prophets concerning the Messiah and his great work, if the reformation of natural religion by Jesus Christ be all that the Messiah was to do, and

that the metaphorical prophecies foretold? Why do these
ostles use the very same foreign language, and the same dark
pressions as the prophets do, if it were their design to explain
m so far from their literal and most obvious meaning? Do
h prophets and apostles, and Christ himself in the midst of
m, all conspire to let in the light of natural religion upon the
rupted and benighted world only by such obscure phrases as
se? If they all mean no more by these sacrificial words than
rippa does, would not any plain and impartial reader be
pted to think the New Testament was written to puzzle us as
ch as to instruct us? And how is it possible that a common
der could ever find out the true meaning of the word of God
such an important point of faith and hope as this? Set all
se phrases of atonement before a heathen, and do you think
would learn natural religion by them, or derive Agrippa's
ed from them? No: by no means.

Or if we should suppose, and it must be granted, that some
the doctrines of christianity relating to the death of Christ
ght be delivered in figurative speeches, and dark sentences, at
st, for wise purposes by Jesus our great Master in his own life-
ne, before the accomplishment of those events to which the
ctrines referred, yet can it be supposed that his missionaries
apostles should never make a clearer explication of them
er these events were fulfilled, and tell us that they meant very
le more than the religion of nature? Could they not have
d this in plainer terms than in the phrases which they have
itten, and which I have cited? Is it possible that Agrippa
nself, when he reads the writings of the prophets and apostles
thout any prejudice, should believe that all these sacrificial
rases of the Old and New Testament, with many more of the
e kind, signify nothing but a restoration of natural religion by
sus Christ, with a martyrdom to vindicate his mission? Can
honestly think they convey no tidings to men of a real and
oper *atonement made for our sins* by the sufferings of our bles-
d Saviour, and of which we are to partake by receiving him
cording to the gospel? I own I am surprised to think that
y man who professes to submit his belief to the word of God
ould refuse so very plain and express a truth.

Are not these the gentlemen who are continually giving us
ution to *keep close to scripture, to use the words and expressions
scripture in all matters of revelation, to speak of the doc-
ines of the gospel as Christ and his apostles speak?* Are
t these the persons who are extremely jealous of admitting any
ing into christianity, but what Christ and his apostles have
ught expressly in the New Testament? Are they not per-
tually insisting upon it, that we must take our religion from
ripture itself? And do we not effectually obey this their caution

and advice, in our belief of the doctrine of *the atonement of Christ* for sin? Is it not most strongly and evidently taught in the New Testament? Is it not taught in many pages, and in great variety of expression there, and that by almost all the writers of that book? Is it not brought in, in the sacred epistles, almost upon every occasion? Are not the great duties of christianity, faith, love, and prayer, built much upon it by the apostles? What shall we say to men who will not observe the very cautions and advices, which they themselves lay down, in forming the articles of their faith? Men who leave out a most plain, express, and important article, and break through all rules of just interpretation, rather than allow of any doctrine in christianity, which doth not suit with their scheme and fancy? If the prophets and apostles never so expressly reveal and dictate such a truth, the words must be tortured and bowed by all the arts of criticism to make them speak and mean something else.

Agrippa has confessed that it was one great design of the coming of Christ to root out superstition from the minds of men, in all the various fooleries of it which had possessed both Jews and heathens: But if both Christ and his apostles taught them the principles of natural religion by such figurative and sacrificial expressions, was not this the ready way to fill their heads with superstitious fancies, by taking these things in too literal a sense, when their teachers left them to seek the true sense amidst such far distant and hard tropes and figures? Has not this very thing been the cause of many superstitions both in the Jewish and Gentile nations, by their taking allegories in a literal sense? Did they not both indulge the fancy and vain opinion of obtaining pardon of sin, and favour with God, by substituting their sacrifices in the room of real godliness, and with the neglect of inward religion and true virtue? This was superstition indeed, and such as neither the Old or the New Testament ever allows. But tell me, Agrippa, could this glorious Reformer of the world, this divine prophet, and his twelve missionaries think of no better way to drive men out of all hope and expectations of pardon and acceptance with God, through any such substitutions or sacrifices whatsoever, than by representing Christ so often as a substitute *to die in our stead*, and as *a sacrifice for the sins of men*? If they designed to banish this doctrine from the earth, would they ever have taught men to depend on his death or blood as an atonement for sin, and as the ground of their acceptance with the God of heaven? It is true, Agrippa will say, Christ and his apostles teach us all the duties of morality and virtue, as necessary things to eternal life, and that in very plain language; and that these sacrificial terms are only eastern and Jewish ornaments of speech in condescension to the humours of the world, both Jews and Gentiles, who could not be all at once beat out of their veneration for sacrifices and atonements.

We allow it, Agrippa, thus far, that true virtue and pure religion is taught in plain language by these divine missionaries: But it were far better for them to have left it in that plain language, than to have superadded so many of the sacrificial phrases, if they meant utterly to root all the doctrine of substitutions and atonements out of the minds and hearts of Jews and Gentiles. To me it is evident as the sun-beams, that while the New Testament restores natural religion to us in the brightest and airest light, and lays the strongest obligations on us to perform all the duties of it; yet it still supposes the imposibility of our salvation thereby, through our own incapacity to perform these duties perfectly; and therefore it sets forth to our view the blessed sacrifice of the Son of God, which is *the only true and proper atonement for our sins.* Nor does it set this atonement in the room of our endeavours after inward religion and real virtue, but in the room of all other sacrifices whatsoever, whether Jewish or Gentile. As for all the Jewish offerings, they were but appointed types of the sacrifice of Christ, and could never really atone for the sins of mankind against God as Ruler of the world. And the sacrifices of the Gentiles, what were they, but substitutions and offerings of beasts or men upon their altars, such as God never appointed, and therefore would never accept, either as real atonements, or as figures of the true propitiation and atonement. This is the most evident sense of St. Paul, in Rom. viii. 1—3. *There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus,* that is, who trust in him as the medium of their pardon, and *who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit,* that is, who live holy lives: *what the law could not do in that it was weak,* and unable to justify us *through the flesh,* that is, through our inability to perform it, *God* has done this by *sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh,* and a sacrifice for sin, as it is in the Greek, has *condemned sin in the flesh,* &c. and thus made a way through his sacrifice of atonement for our justification and sanctification.

But lest the force and significancy of any of these scriptures should be lost for want of a true idea of what I mean by a "proper and complete atonement made for the sins of men," I would here give some general explication of what I intend by the word. I do not pretend to such accuracy and exactness of definition, as might be expected from a civilian or a divine; but I would speak what I take to be the common sense of the thinking part of mankind in this matter, and more particularly the sense of the writers of the Old and New Testament. By atonement for sin therefore, I do not mean any such thing as shall in a proper and literal sense appease the wrath of God, the offended Governor, which is supposed to be kindled against his sinful creatures, and shall incline his heart to mercy, which was before determined

upon vengeance; for though this doctrine may be so represented sometimes after the manner of men, yet this is an idea or supposition in many respects inconsistent with the attributes and actions of the blessed God, and with the doctrine of the New Testament. In that book God represents himself as *rich in mercy*, and for this reason he pitied sinful creatures, who had broken his law, and had deserved to die, before he had received any atonement; and therefore God himself provided and sent his own Son to become a sacrifice of atonement, and a ransom for them; he appointed him to be a surety for us, *the just for the unjust*, and to suffer death in the room and stead of sinners.

By the words *atonement* or *propitiation*, I mean therefore some toilsome or painful thing to be done or suffered, or both, by Jesus Christ the Son of God, in the room and stead of sinful men, as a penance or punishment on the account of their sins; and this by the wise and righteous appointment of God the universal Governor, shall excuse the penitent offender from the punishment that was due, and obtain his pardon, because it shall give a recompence to the authority of the divine law-giver for the affront which was put upon him by the sins of men, and shall make some reparation of honour to his holy law which was broken. And this is not only intended to manifest the evil nature and the desert of sin, together with God's hatred of it; but it shall also answer the demand and design of the threatening by such actual pain or punishment, though it is laid on the surety instead of the offender; and thus it may secure the law from being wilfully broken, in time to come, as effectually as if the offenders themselves had been punished. Such a pain, penance, or punishment, are the humiliation and sufferings of Jesus Christ, his labours and sorrows: And it is in this sense that the language of expiation or atonement, of propitiation and ransom is so often used*. It is in this sense that he was said to become a *sacrifice for us, to bear our sins on his own body on the tree*; 1 Pet. ii. 23. *and to be made sin*; or a sin-offering *for us, who knew no sin himself*; 2 Cor. v. 21. In this sense he is said *to be made a curse*, and suffer death for us, and to redeem us from it thereby, because the law curses every sinner, and pronounces death upon him; Gal. iii. 10. Now by these appointed sufferings of the Son of God, in the room and stead of sinful men, there is an honourable amends made to the Governor of the world for the violation of his law, and a glorious way made for the exercise of mercy in the pardon of the sinner; and that without any imputation of reflection upon the holiness of God's nature and conduct, or any suspicion of the justice of his govern-

* Christ, after he became our surety, was not, nor could be delivered from those sorrows which were the punishment of our sins, he being as our expiatory sacrifice, not only on the occasion of our sins, but in our stead, to bear the punishment of our iniquity. Whitby on Heb. v. 3.

ment, as if he would connive at sin; since he discovers and declares, that in his passing by all the sins of his people in former ages, and in pardoning and justifying sinners now who believe in Christ, he will manifest his justice or righteousness by requiring such a sacrifice whereby sin shall be punished, though the sinner be spared. This is the plain meaning of the apostle; Rom. iii. 24—26. *Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus:* Which text our fathers have ever thought an unanswerable proof as well as a clear explication of this doctrine. And I think there is abundant reason in scripture for us to support this sentiment of our fathers, though all the modern writers should agree to oppose it. For my part, as I live at a distance from London, I have conversed with very few of them, and shall still converse with fewer, if they go on to forsake both the language and sense of scripture, and follow the opinions of Agrippa.

Here Ferventio interrupted him. I acknowledge, Sir, we live in a very degenerate age, wherein ancient errors are revived, and new ones arise among modern writers; but as to the doctrine of the proper atonement of Christ, I hope there are many who maintain and defend it still, both in their volumes of sermons, and other discourses, which are published on this subject. Among others I would point you to a valuable treatise on *Jesus the Mediator*, by a nameless author, who has critically and earnestly established this doctrine against the modern disbelievers of it, and has shewn much of the wisdom of God in this appointment, and of what importance it is to us to believe it. I confess, saith Ferventio, the author is suspected not to be very orthodox in some other important points: But this makes it still more remarkable, and gives us more reason to think that it is the doctrine of scripture, when it impresses itself so strongly upon the minds of those men who forsake the doctrines of their catechisms in other respects. I wish, with all my soul, that every man beheld every gospel-truth in the same strong light of assurance as I do, and were as fervent and solicitous to vindicate and support it; but in this one article of the atonement of Christ, I think I can venture to recommend this author. Forgive me, Paulinus, that I have interrupted you so long, and I entreat you to proceed now in reading your paper.

I obey, says Paulinus, and thank you for the interruption. Observe now, says he, though I have not hitherto used the word *satisfaction for sin*, nor will I zealously contend for it, because

it is not expressly written in scripture, yet the same sense and meaning is so plainly asserted there, that I make no scruple to use it: And to make the innocency and propriety of this word appear, let us consider the ideas that belong to it. Satisfaction is often made to a private person or a public governor.

Satisfaction is often made to a private person for an injury done him, by doing or suffering something which shall remove his own personal just resentment against the offender, whether this be done or suffered by the offender himself, or by a friend or surety for him: Now in this case the offended person may acknowledge himself satisfied with some very small sort of recompence, according to his own fancy: such as the mere asking pardon, the promising not to offend again, or the payment of a little money, or some small penalty of pain or loss: But this is not properly the case here in the satisfaction which Christ made to God his Father for the sins of men.

The other sort of satisfaction is, when a *public law is broken*, and the governor, though he design to shew mercy to the guilty, yet demands some satisfaction for the offence, something instead of the punishment of the offender, which may equally secure the great ends of government. A wise governor in this case will usually demand such a satisfaction as may best answer the ends of the law, and maintain the authority of the government, such as may shew the wisdom and justice of the law-giver in making such a law, and appointing such a penalty, and may deter persons for the future from the like offences, even though he design to pardon the present offender. In this case, if a surety be admitted to stand in the room of the criminal, this is a matter of mere favour; and such a satisfaction is generally required of him as comes nearest to the execution of the penalty threatened by the law, if any circumstances should render it not proper for him to sustain the same in all respects. I know not in history a more happy example of this than the case of Zaleucus, a law-giver of the Locrensians, who having made a law that an adulterer should lose both his eyes, and finding his own son guilty of that crime, he ordered one of his own eyes to be put out, and one of his son's. *Thus he rendered to the law, says Valerius Maximus, the punishment which it claimed, with a most admirable temperature of justice, dividing himself into a merciful father, and a just law-giver.* The eye of Zaleucus was here made a partial sacrifice of atonement for the offence of the criminal; this loss of his own eye, together with that of his son, gave such a satisfaction to the government, and as effectually secured future obedience to the law, as if the adulterer had lost both his eyes*.

* I presume no reader will be so weak as [illegible] parallel in all things, and to suppose that [illegible] to the justice of God, and Christ make [illegible]

uch a sort of satisfaction is that which the sufferings and of Christ have made to God, the Father and Governor of rld, for the sins of men. Death was the threatened pen- r sin; *the wages of sin is death*: Rom. vi. 23. *Tribula- nd anguish on every soul that doth amiss*; chapter ii. 9.— God in mercy to the offender hath not only admitted, but rovided a surety, even his own Son; and he hath accepted agonies of soul, and his bodily death, in the room and of our agonies of soul, and our eternal death, and regards satisfaction for the violation of his law by our sins. He is ed as a law-giver and Governor by this sacrifice, and upon count it is properly called a satisfaction as well as a sacrifice nement, or propitiation for sin; so that God now can hon- ly pardon the sinner without any imputation upon himself, of his own remissness of government, or of foolish pity offender, God having been satisfied with the honour which t has done to his law and government by his death. Justice nercy are tempered here, and both shine with their peculiar s. It is only through the propitiation of Christ, that God rs to be a just or righteous God, though his mercy justifies nner who believes in Jesus, and trusts in this propitiation.— further vindication of the use of the word *satisfaction* in ontrovery, in the treatises of Grotius and of Turretine, and s on that subject, which I have read in my younger years. e diverted perhaps too far out of the way of argument I took; but it was needful to give a clear idea of what is t by *the atonement of Christ*, that the pursuit of my argu- in this way of query, might appear more perspicuous, and t move onward with greater force. I have enquired of ppa already, whether it was possible that St. Paul, St. Peter St. John, by all the various sacrificial phrases which they so apply to the death of Christ, can be supposed to mean no- more than a martyrdom for that doctrine of his which es sinners to repentance by a promise of pardon. I proceed e next enquiry:—

Query II. In the second place I would desire Agrippa to ne, what is the true intent and meaning of this sort of sacri- language, when it is used by Jews or Heathens? And why ld the same language have the same meaning, when it is ied to the death of Christ in the New Testament? What is ense of such phrases when they are made use of by Moses, aw-giver of the Jews under God, considered only as their ical king, and the civil governor of that nation? What is meaning of sin-offerings and sacrifices of atonements? What the Jewish law-giver intend, when the people shall have

made was partial, and did not save both the eyes of his son. The d proper so far as it goes; but I grant, if Zaleucus had lost both would have been a more perfect parallel.

been guilty of some violation of the statutes of God, as King of the land, or neglect of his ordinances, that they must *slay a lamb or a goat, and burn it upon the altar, that the priest shall make atonement for them hereby, and the offence shall be forgiven them?* And even if *the ruler or any of the common people shall commit a sin through ignorance against the commandments of the Lord, they were to lay their hand upon the head of the goat, as a sin-offering*; is not this confessing some iniquity which then came to their knowledge, and transferring it as far as possible upon the head of the animal, and devoting it to death in their stead? The sin-offering was to be slain before the Lord; the priest was ordained to *take the blood thereof with his finger, to put it on the horns of the altar, and to pour out the rest at the altar's foot; the fat was to be burned upon the altar, the priest was to make atonement in this manner for the sin that they had committed, and it shall be forgiven them.* See Lev. iv. 2.—35. And in the great day of expiation, when an atoning sacrifice was offered for the whole nation to remove their annual guilt, some of the same rites were to be used, the beast was slain and offered to God on the altar, and the blood was carried into the most holy place, and sprinkled before the presence of God, that the blessed God, who dwelt in a visible glory on the mercy-seat, might, as it were, see and accept of the blood or life of other creatures in the room of the life of the offending Jews. See Lev. chapters iv. v. vi. and xvi.

Thus it is evident, that the design of these bleeding sacrifices of atonement, was to shew not only that the criminal deserved death in the sight of God, according to strict and severe justice; but that God would shew mercy to the criminal, by sparing him upon his confession of sin, and his repentance, and would accept of the vicarious death of another creature in his stead.—This was the plain case and evident design in the first institution of sacrifices given to Adam after his first sin, and it runs through all the offerings of atonement in successive ages*. I must confess, said Paulinus, it has been long my settled opinion, that it was God's original and eternal decree and purpose of making his Son Jesus a proper sacrifice of atonement for the sins of men, that gave occasion to all the sacrificial rites of atonement, and the sacrificial phrases which were ever used, and were so well known by the patriarchs, and which were practised by Moses and Aaron and were established in the Jewish nation, and which indeed were conveyed by Noah to his posterity, though they were dismally corrupted in the heathen world.

But to return to Jewish sacrifices. Those who will scarce

* See this matter set in a good light by an anonymous author in the treatise, entitled, *Revelation Examined with Candour*, part I. page 140, &c. who has promised to shew how the death of Christ was figured in that covenant with Adam, wherein sacrifices were instituted.

acknowledge these ceremonies to be proper types of the sacrifice of Christ and his blood, yet, I think, they generally allow thus much, that by the appointment of God, these sacrifices were to make a sort of political atonement or satisfaction to God their political Lord or King, as far as they were capable, for breaking any of his statutes, and when this was done, the offenders stood right in his sight as king of the nation, and he did not execute his threatenings upon them. The life of the sacrifice was a ransom for their lives; and *the blood which was the life* or animal soul of the beast, was a ransom for their animal soul, that is, their bodily life*. Now when this same sort of language in the various phrases of it, is used in the New Testament, and in a most express manner applied to the death of Christ, to the pouring out of his blood, which is called the *blood of sprinkling*, and the real atonement or propitiation which is made thereby in the sight of God, the Lord of conscience, and the Governor of the immortal souls or spirits of men, why should not we suppose that the words bear the same sense? Why are we not to understand by these expressions, that *Christ made his soul an offering for sin*, that Jesus Christ by his death became a true sacrifice of propitiation for sinful men, by dying in the room and stead of the offenders, and obtained the pardon of those sins, those real immoralities or impieties, *from which they never could be justied*, or released, *by the law of Moses;* Acts xiii. 39. and for which there was no sacrifice appointed by that law-giver? What? Must the *blood of bulls and goats make a real atonement for the sins of the Jewish nation*, that is, their political offenees or ceremonial defilements in the sight of God, as their peculiar King and Governor, so as to restore them to temporal blessings; and shall the blood of Christ be construed to make only a typical and figurative atonement for the sins of men, which deserve eternal death, in the sight of God, the universal Ruler of all nations, and the Lord of conscience? If any of these be typical and shadowy, good Agrippa, let the blood of bulls and goats be the type and shadow, as St. Paul, in the ninth chapter to the Hebrews, declares, and not the blood of the Son of God; nor let the expressions that relate to it be explained all away, and be made to vanish into type, and trope, and metaphor, when they are applied to the substance and antitype. The ninth and tenth chapters to the Hebrews, I think, might sufficiently convince any willing and unprejudiced reader, how much the apostle had his eye and heart fixed upon this doctrine of the real propitiation

* Some have objected here, that the beasts wh ch were brought to the priest for sacrifices, were mere mulcts or fines imposed on the offender. But I answer, What need was there then that the beast should immediately *be killed before the Lord? What need of the hand of the offender to be laid on the head of the sacrifice, that it might be accepted as an atonement for him?* Lev. i. 4, 5. If the beast were not to die in the offender's stead, why is it said, without shedding of blood *there is no remission; Heb. ix. 22.* A fine doth not require blood.

made by the blood of Christ, as typified by the Jewish sacrifices and propitiations: And when these are said to *sanctify to the purifying of the flesh*, that is, to remove bodily or outward impurities, so as to set the offender right in the sight of God as King of the nation, or visible head of the church, dwelling in the holy of holies on the mercy seat, *how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works*, that is, remove the guilt of those works from the conscience which deserved death? Heb. ix. 13, 14.

I would enquire further, what is the meaning of John the baptist, the fore-runner of Christ, when in John i. 29. he says, upon his sight of Jesus, *Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the sins of the world?* Does he call him a Lamb, because he takes away sin by his doctrine of pardon upon repentance, and by his death confirms this doctrine? Did lambs ever take away sin in this manner, by doctrine and martyrdom? Is there any sense in which a lamb takes away sin, but as an atoning sacrifice by his bloody death? And how can this be applied to Christ in this place, in any other sense? And this is plainly expressed by the apostles John and Peter: If we consult Peter; 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. he says, "Ye were redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish." And John tells us in Rev. v. 8, 9. "The elders fell down before the Lamb, and said, thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood."

But I would pursue this second query a little further still. What is the true meaning of this sort of expressions, when God himself uses them to Eliphaz, and the other friends of Job, who had nothing to do with Judaism, and probably were born before Moses? "Take seven bullocks and seven rams,—and offer up for yourselves, said he, a burnt-offering, for my wrath is kindled against you; and my servant Job shall pray for you, for him will I accept, lest I deal with you after your folly." Here is an atonement plainly enjoined, that God might honourably pardon them.

What doth Balak the king of Moab mean by his question put to Balaam, as it is recorded by Micah the prophet, chapter v. 6, 7. "*Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, or the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?* Does not this language plainly signify an atonement for sin? Though Balaam by the prescription of moral duties shews him, that all these expensive and bloody sacrifices are not sufficient to please God without holiness*. It is plain therefore, that others besides Jews, use this language in the same sense.

* Since I have mentioned this text to shew the sense and meaning of Balak in his enquiries, it is necessary I should more at large explain Balaam's answer,

Yet again let me ask, what is meant by all the phrases of he like kind, when they are used by the ancient heathens, as we

ecause the men of Agrippa's creed boast of this text as a proof of their doctrine, iz. that all sacrifices are useless things toward any real atonement for sin: For hen Balak puts the question, say they, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or ten thousands of rivers of oil, or the sacrifice of my own Son?" Balaam refers him only to the practice of natural religion: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God;" without so much as any positive approbation of sacrifices? And, say they, this very answer of Balaam, the heathen, is cited by Micah, a prophet of the Jews, as an instruction for them how to please God, that is, by moral duties, and not by sacrifices. Now to give a fair answer to this matter, let it be considered,

First, Balak was the king of Moab, and imagined God was to be engaged on his side by sacrifices: Therefore in several places "he built seven altars, and offered a bull and a ram on every altar, that he might prevail with God to give him victory over Israel;" Num. xxiii. When he found all this was vain labour, he may then be supposed to enquire of Balaam, "wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" Are not my sacrifices young enough? Must they be calves of a year old? Are they not large enough? Shall I bring a thousand rams instead of seven, or rivers of oil instead of a small quantity? Or are they not precious enough? Shall I offer my own children instead of brute beasts? Whereupon Balaam seems to say, Alas, you are quite mistaken: It is not for want of younger or larger sacrifices, or of any other kind, that God neglects you: If you would become acceptable to him, you must mind the duties of morality and piety, "do justice, love mercy, and humble thyself, as the original words are, to walk with thy God." So that sacrifices are neither encouraged nor forbidden in this speech of Balaam: but Balak is pointed to that morality and inward religion which he wanted, and without which no sacrifices whatsoever could be acceptable to God.

Secondly, Consider that Balaam was a heathen, who was sometimes inspired, but not always. Now if these words as spoken by Balaam were not inspired, then it is only Micah the Jewish prophet's citation from a heathen, to put the Jews in mind how much more acceptable the duties of morality are to God than mere ceremonies. The Jews were much of Balak's mind, and thought ceremonies and sacrifices should do all for them, while they neglected moral duties. Balaam is silent about sacrifices, and directs Balak only to piety and morality; and Micah, for the same reason, cites the same sentence to the Jews, that while he reproves them by the mouth of a heathen, he may shame them into virtue and piety. Probably Balaam, among the rest of the heathens, had lost the original institution and design of sacrifices, and the light of nature could not teach it him again: And therefore he makes no answer about them, nor saith any thing of them; but the light of nature could teach him, that to do justly, &c. was necessary to please God. But on the other hand, suppose Balaam was inspired to deliver this sentence to Balak; and suppose, while he preaches morality, he had gone so far as to have strongly denied the use of sacrifices here, it can mean only a comparative denial, that is, a preference of morality when compared with ceremonies; for comparisons are expressed often in this manner in the Eastern languages, by a negation of one thing, and an affirmation of the other, as is abundantly evident in this very case; Hos. vi. 6. "I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt-offerings."

Thirdly, Consider yet further, that when the prophet Isaiah reproves the Jews for want of moral virtue, he speaks more expressly against sacrifices than Balaam does here. He tells them, their "oblations were vain, their new moons and appointed feasts were an abomination; Is. i. 11—15, &c. not that God had not appointed them, but because they were not attended with moral virtues: And upon this account he says, "Bring no more vain oblations: To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me?" Yet all this language of the

read in their own writings, when either beasts or men were devoted to death, in order to save a guilty person or a nation from punishment, and the supposed anger of their gods? What can be the meaning of these phrases when they are used upon this occasion, "Averruncare malum," or "deorum iras, lustrare populum aut exercitum, piaculum fieri," or "περιψημα αναθημα, αποκαθαρμα, expiare crimina, scelus, reatum;" I say, what does all this mean, but to make atonement for sin, to remove the punishment from the offenders, by letting it fall on the surety or sacrifice? So the two Decii, father and son, devoted themselves to death, and saved the Roman army from the supposed anger of the gods and destruction. So Menæceus is said to have devoted himself for the city of Thebes, in danger of being destroyed by the Argives. So the Massilians were wont to expiate their city, by taking a person devoted, by imprecating on his head all the evil to which the city was liable, and casting him into the sea, with these words, περιψημα ημων γενου, "Be thou our propitiatory sacrifice." So the Egyptians, as Herodotus testifies, laid their imprecations on the heads of those that were devoted to death, that all evil might be turned from the sacrificer, and from Egypt, and laid on the head of the sacrifice. See many citations and instances of this kind in learned writers. Consult Grotius's little book "of the satisfaction of Christ," and let Agrippa answer those arguments better than any of the socinians have done before he renounce this doctrine. Consult another very short essay on this subject by the late learned Doctor Owen, at the end of his Treatise of the Trinity, where, as I remember, he shews the true meaning of "one person's dying for another" among the ancient heathens, and the doctrine of atonement for sin as practised among them, which may be easily reviewed without running to more large and learned volumes*. Now when this is the plain meaning of atonement for sin, or purging away sin by sacrifice, so well known among the Jews, and amongst

prophet does not prove that sacrifices were utterly useless under that economy wherein they were prescribed; for at another time the very same prophet, as well as others, reproves the Jews for the neglect of the sacrifices and offerings which God had appointed; Is. xliii. 23. Mal. iii. 8. Such kind of language therefore, whether used by a Jewish or a Gentile prophet, only shews that a dependence on sacrifice without real virtue or piety, is worth nothing in God's account.

* It will be granted that the heathens speaking of their sacrifices and atonements for sin, use some such expressions, as "appeasing the wrath of their gods, by the blood of their sacrifices," &c. which cannot properly be applied to the sacrifice of Christ in their literal sense; because in propriety of speech, God has no wrath awakened in him by sin, nor can any blood properly appease that wrath. But let it be remembered, that the great God condescending to the weakness of men, sometimes speaks in their phrases, and hath been pleased to represent himself as angry on the account of sin, and as appeased by the sacrifices of atonement in several places of scripture, though the true and proper ideas of these things are evident and obvious enough, as they have been explained before.

heathens, that is, through all the world; I would ask Agrippa y should not the same sort of expressions be permitted to nify much the same thing, when they are made use of in the w Testament, and applied to the sufferings and death of Christ, an atonement for the sins of men?

Were not the apostles sent to preach the gospel to the gen- s as well as the Jews? and if it could be supposed that they d these expressions of atonement only in conformity to Jewish toms and phrases, why did they use them so much among the atiles? Did they not design to preach in such language that gentiles might understand their meaning? But if these rases were well known among the heathens as well as the Jews, n why should we not suppose these expressions, when applied the death of Christ, to be understood in the common sense of nkind, both Jews and Gentiles?

To confirm all this, let me enquire here, what was the sense which the primitive christians understood these expressions of rist and his apostles? How do they describe and set forth ir conceptions of these great and momentous doctrines in their itings? Do they not speak plainly and strongly of the atone- nt of Christ for sin, and his dying as a sacrifice to expiate ir offences, and their interest in this forgiveness by faith? w if primitive writers inform us this was the common sense in ich the first christians understood the speeches of Christ and apostles, why should we not imagine that they took them in right sense? Why should the church be supposed to wait so ny hundred years for the true meaning of the christian doctrine the days of Socinus? Why was it left to wander so long in ch strange superstition and mysterious darkness, as the doc- ne of "atonement for sin by the death of Christ," if these eeches meant nothing else but natural religion, or the confir- ation of it by the martyrdom of a prophet? In doctrines and positions of lesser moment I easily suppose many of the fathers y greatly mistake, but methinks in doctrines of such vast portance, Christ would not suffer all his early churches to be istaken.

III. Again, I would ask Agrippa, was not Socrates raised by divine providence to instruct a corrupt nation, and to form a degenerate age, as he supposes Jesus Christ to be? Did not teach the "unity of the true God," and the true way of orshipping him by inward devotion of the heart, in the midst many Grecian idolatries and superstitions, as Jesus taught the iritual nature of God and inward religion, in opposition to e traditions of Jews, and mere outward ceremonies? Was not crates accused for speaking against the idols of Athens, and e public religion, as Jesus was for his reproving the corrupt anners of the Jews? Was he not condemned by wicked men,

and put to death by poison on this account, as Christ was by the cross? Did he not bear his testimony to the truth of his doctrine, and seal it with his death as Jesus did? Do not the deists cry him up as a martyr for the "unity of the true God," and the rules of virtue," as our modern christians make Christ a mere martyr for his doctrine of reformation? And had he not several disciples who taught his doctrine concerning the unity of God and the divine perfections? And do they not declare the true sentiments of Socrates, their master, as the apostles declare the true doctrines of Christ? But does Socrates himself, or any of his disciples ever talk in such a manner about his death and the cup of poison, as Christ and his apostles do about the crucifixion of the blessed Jesus? Do the Greek philosophers lay out such strange language upon it, and such various and hard tropes and figures to represent the great importance of his death to their practice of virtue, or the obtaining the divine favour? Does he ever say for himself, or did they ever say for him, "unless ye eat the flesh of Socrates, ye cannot be philosophers," or that "Socrates gave his flesh for meat to the people, and for the life of the world, or gave himself a ransom for many?" Did Plato ever teach his pupils that "they must be saved by the death of Socrates," or that "he reconciled them to God by his dying for them?" Do they ever "glory in the poison of Socrates, as St. Paul glories in the cross of Christ?" When they taught the doctrines of Socrates concerning God, religion, and virtue, do they ever say, "we preach Socrates poisoned," as the apostles preached "Christ crucified," though Socrates died by poison, attesting the truth of his doctrine, as Christ died by the cross to attest his? Can it be supposed then that our Saviour's death held only the same place in his doctrine as the death of Socrates held in his, that is, as an attestation to the truth of it, or sealing it with his blood? Can we persuade ourselves, that when "St. Paul determined to know nothing else amongst the Corinthians in comparison of Christ and him crucified," that he meant merely the martyrdom of Christ to attest the truths of natural religion, of which he was the restorer? Surely the death of Christ upon the cross has something more to do in this our gospel, than the death of Socrates had in his philosophy; it has more to do than merely to bear witness to the truth of his doctrine, and to convince the world that he was sent to publish it; since his crucifixion and death, according to St. Paul's writing, lies as the foundation of the gospel, that is, of the blessed tidings of peace and reconciliation to God, and the recovery of sinful men to holiness and happiness.

The gospel is so much concerned in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, that it is represented by the apostle, as a considerable and very important part of the message or "word of reconcilia-

on committed to him;" 2 *Cor.* v. 19, 21. "God was in Christ conciling the world to himself, not imputing their trespasses them,—for he hath made him to be sin for us who knew no n, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

IV. I would yet further ask Agrippa, why St. Paul should equently represent the gospel as a great mystery*, a deep and cred thing which the world knew not, nor could know till it was vealed? A mystery which was hid from ages and generations, ich was hid in God from all the ancient ages, or from the ginning of the world, the wisdom of God in a mystery, the anifold wisdom which is made known by the church to the prinalities and powers of heaven, or which the angels themselves sire to pry into, as St. Peter speaks, and which is made known the nations by preaching the mystery of faith, the great mysry of godliness? Is there any such depth of divine wisdom anifested in the common truths of natural religion? Is there y such hidden mystery in the doctrines which the light of ture teaches, as that the former ages of the world could not sibly find it out, and which angels are forced to pry into, in der to learn it? Is there any thing that deserves such lanage in the dictates of reason, even if you should add the happy surrection of the body to them, which is discovered by Christ the reward of his faithful followers? But that the Son of od who "dwelt in the bosom of the Father before the world as, who was with God, and who was God, should take flesh d blood upon him," that he might be capable of dying, and at he should actually die in the room and stead of guilty men, a sacrifice of atonement, that he should reconcile them to God his death, that he should rise again, and reign in heaven to mplete this salvation, and that sinful men must obtain pardon sin and eternal life, by the sufferings and death of the Son of od as a sacrifice in their stead, and by faith in his blood; this such a doctrine unknown to the world, such a divine mystery deserves all these expressions of wisdom and honour which e apostle applies to it. Though the heathens as well as e Jews might easily understand this doctrine when it was eached unto them, according to the notion of expiation by crifices, which was familiar to them, yet it was originally a ystery which they could not have known without express velation, and they were averse to receive it when it was vealed.

* It is known Mr. Locke has taught some persons to imagine, that in almost if t entirely all the places where the word "mystery" is applied to the gospel, it ates chiefly or only to the preaching of it to the gentiles as well as to the Jews, d the admission of the gentiles into the kingdom of the Messiah. I grant it y include this in two or three places; but it is sufficiently evident, that in veral other scriptures it refers to the doctrines of the gospel itself, without any cessary reference to the reception of it by the gentile world: But that is not present business.

V. I will make another query, and ask Agrippa a friends again, why St. Paul speaks of the gospel of Ch such a matter of folly and ridicule in the esteem of the wi of this world, or the heathen philosophers, if it were littl than the doctrine of the light of nature, the rules of virtu the favour of God to those who followed them with a repe of their former vices? Why should he call this gospel foolishness of preaching, by which it pleased God to sav that believe?" Why should he speak of his venturing to it as a matter of courage sufficient to boast of, and that times over; that "he is not ashamed of the gospel of C that he is not ashamed to preach it even at Rome," and t should call "the cross of Christ his glory;" Rom. i. 16 Tim. i. 12. and Gal. vi. 14. bearing up boldly through reproach and shame that was cast upon his doctrine by the wisdom and philosophy? If the mere restoration of natur gion was the grand subject, or chief theme of his ministry, the heathen philosophers have ever pronounced foolishnes it; or have put him to shame for such sort of doctrines a own reason might teach them, and several of them did t It is evident therefore, that the name of Christ crucified, apostle's lips, includes in it the reconciliation of sinful God, by the sufferings of the cursed death of the cross Jesus endured, and which is laid as the foundation of his re This is that which some of the philosophers of Greece deride and call foolishness, viz. for one person to hope for of sin and eternal life by the sufferings and death of an and this is the doctrine of which St. Paul is not ashame makes it the mattter of his sermons and his glory.

VI. Might I be permitted to proceed in this sort of in gative manner, I would enquire of Agrippa and his compa whether a much meaner person than they themselves t Jesus Christ to be, might not have been sufficient to be sen God as a prophet, to restore natural religion, and teach the all the doctrines which Christ taught them? I suppos believe him, according to scripture, to be the only-begotte of God, who lay in the bosom of the Father before the fo tion of the world, the brightness of his Father's glory, a express image of his person, by whom and for whom all were created in heaven and earth, visible and invisible, who Lord of angels, and to whom all the principalities and pow the upper world, are made subject, and are but his minis spirits. Now was it worth while for so illustrious a being, so near to godhead even in their sense, to be sent down earth to spend a life in labour and sorrows, to be sco and buffeted, and nailed to a cross, and expire there i midst of shame and agonies, if his chief business had been

store natural religion as a great Prophet or Teacher, and to die in the confirmation of it? Might not Isaiah or Jeremiah, or one of the old prophets have been raised to life for such a purpose as this, rather than the only Son of God sent down to die so cruel a death? Might not some new prophet have been raised up amongst men, and been furnished with the power of miracles like Moses, to have attested all the truths that Jesus preached to the world, and then died as a martyr for them, and rose again to give them confirmation? What doctrine did our blessed Saviour ever pronounce, which the tongue of a much inferior person could not have pronounced? What visible miracle did he work, which a Moses or an Elijah could not have wrought by commission from heaven? Is the choice of so divine a messenger for such purposes of a mere prophet, as might have been fulfilled by much meaner persons, agreeable to the conduct of supreme wisdom? Or had the great God so little value for the peace and happiness of his best beloved Son, as to make him a needless sacrifice? Surely if we believe the history of the gospel, and the language in which it is expressed, our own reason would teach us also to believe, that so glorious a person as Jesus Christ, was sent down and died for some such grand and important design as the mission and death of a meaner person could never effect, that is, as the apostle Paul expresses it, "to purge away our sins by the sacrifice of himself;" Heb. ix. 26. or as Jesus himself informs us, "to give his life a ransom for sinful men;" Mat. xx. 28.

And it is well worthy of our notice, that in several places of the New Testament, where the death of Christ and our redemption by it are mentioned, there the dignity and sublime character of our Saviour is at the same time represented, to shew us how great a person this was who must die for our salvation, as in the text now cited; Heb. i. 2, 3. "The Son of God who is appointed heir of all things, by whom he made the world, who is the brightness of his glory, and his express image;" and it is this glorious person who "purged away our sins by himself, that is, by offering himself a sacrifice;" as Heb. chapters ix. and x. So Col. i. 14—16. "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins; who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature, for by him were all things created, visible and invisible;" Heb. ix. 13, 14. "If the blood of bulls and goats purified the flesh, &c. how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge our consciences from dead works?" And in several other places. Do not all these representations of the matter teach us, that the death of a meaner person than the Son of God was not sufficient to attain these ends, and consequently that so very glorious a person was sent down from heaven to live and die on earth for such purposes as an inferior *person's life* and death could never have attained.

And as a much meaner person than the Son of God, viz. a prophet or an apostle, might have been sent from heaven to teach all the doctrines which Christ taught, and to become a martyr for them; so in fact the apostles and a thousand martyrs in the primitive times did teach the same doctrines, did bear witness to the same truths, and did actually die in confirmation of them: They suffered deaths full of barbarity and anguish in vindication of the same gospel, they sealed the same covenant of grace with their blood: And yet it is never said concerning any of them, that they "redeemed us with their blood," that "they were made a curse for us, or a sin-offering to reconcile us to God;" They are never said "to make atonement for our sins," nor "to give their lives as a ransom for us:" They never are represented as "bearing our sins on their own body on the tree," though several of them were crucified as well as Christ; nor are we ever said to "be washed from our sins in their blood." These are expressions far above the dignity of their sufferings, and such as belong only to the blessed Jesus: It would be a sort of blasphemy against the Son of God to speak thus concerning the apostles and martyrs. And yet why might not these expressions be as well applied to the apostles and the primitive martyrs, especially such as were inspired of God to teach the same doctrines, and appointed to die in vindication of them, if their sufferings were designed for the same purpose, and meant the same thing as the sufferings of the Son of God? At this rate we might have a hundred Saviours and Redeemers, a hundred sacrifices for sin, and we might wash away our iniquities in the blood of a hundred martyrs. Whereas, alas! the highest and best of them who "stand before the throne of God in white garments;" Rev. vii. 14. they all, "washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb," though they themselves came out of great tribulations, laid down their own lives as witnesses to the same gospel, and set the seal of their blood to the truth of the same promises. Surely the blessed Jesus, our only Redeemer, died to accomplish more sublime purposes than ever they could pretend to; he laid down his life to procure and obtain that pardon and that salvation both for them and for us, which no meaner persons could ever obtain by a thousand lives, or the blood of ten thousand martyrdoms.

Perhaps Agrippa will tell me, that Christ himself expressly assures Pilate; John xviii. 37. "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth;" and therefore it is evident from his own words that his prophetic office was the very design of his incarnation. But I hope Agrippa will allow this answer, viz. that Christ came into the world for several ends, of which this was but one, "to bear witness to the truth;" And he himself as expressly tells his

disciples, that there is another end also to which he came, and it would have been to very little purpose to have told Pilate of that, Mat. xx. 28. "The Son of man came to give his life a ransom for many;" and John x. 10. "I am come that the sheep might have life;" and in verse 11 he informs us by what means he procures this life for his sheep, viz. "I am the good shepherd who giveth his life for the sheep;" and verse 18. who "received commandment from the Father to lay down his life and take it again." St. Paul teaches the Jews the same doctrine, and assigns the same end for Christ's incarnation; Heb. ii. 14. "Because the children were partakers of flesh and blood, Christ himself took part of the same, that through his own death he might destroy the devil and his works; in Heb. x. 5—10. because the Jewish sacrifices and offerings of beasts could not take away sin, "Christ had a body prepared for him, that through the offering of this body of Jesus once for all, we might be perfected by his own sacrifice." And Peter assures us; 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. that "we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, who was fore-ordained from the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times." Thus it appears that the great end for which Christ came, was to obtain pardon of sin by dying for us.

Let me add to this, that not only in the decree of God, but in the very first promise given to man after his fall, Christ is represented as one appointed to suffer; Gen. iii. 15. The "serpent was to bruise his heel." In the first and most significant figures of him by sacrifices, his death and blood were prefigured: In the various promises of the Messiah, especially by Isaiah and Daniel, he is held forth as a Saviour from sin, by his being cut-off, by his suffering and dying, and being made a sin-offering. Are not all these things sufficient to teach Agrippa, that our blessed Lord was not merely put to death by the occasional rage of the wicked Jews against him as a teacher of holiness, and a reformer of mankind, as he supposes, but that he was originally designed and appointed to die a sacrifice for sin? It is plain, that he was early foretold and prefigured in the promises and types and prophecies under this character of a suffering Saviour that he came into our world for this end, and that he was at last delivered, or given up into the hands of his crucifiers, "by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, for this purpose:" Acts ii. 23. And as such he is described and preached by himself and his apostles.

Paulinus was going on with his queries, when one in the company, I think it was Cavenor, interrupted him thus: I have lately heard, Sir, that some of the friends and followers of Agrippa have been made sensible, that "a mere martyrdom to bear witness to the truth of the gospel," is not sufficient to answer

the purpose designed by the blood of Christ, according to scripture; and therefore they have found out a new way to explain the phrases of "making atonement for sin, and dying as a sacrifice for our sins;" they suppose them to reach a little further, and to signify to us, that as the wages or punishment of sin is death, so the death of Christ was designed to shew us what sin deserved, and by this means to discover to us the great evil of sin, and to excite us thereby to repentance and a life of holiness, and that it is chiefly in this manner that we are said to "be saved by the death of Christ, or salvation is ascribed to his blood."

I grant, says Paulinus, this is something nearer to the purpose than the former opinion of "mere bearing witness to his gospel as a martyr;" but still it falls far short of the grand expressions and the plain assertions of scripture, concerning the sacrifice of Christ: And though the death of Christ as an atonement must needs include this as one design of it, viz. "to shew what our sins deserved," yet this cannot be the whole doctrine which is meant by the sacred writers, when they teach us expressly the other end and design of sacrifices, viz. "suffering in the room and stead of the sinner" in a much stronger manner, and apply it to the death of Christ, saying, that "he died for our sins," that he "gave himself a ransom for sinners, that we are reconciled to God by his death, that he made peace by the blood of his cross, that he redeemed us from the curse of the law, by being made a curse for us, that he bare our sins in his body on the tree, &c." all to shew that though the justice of God required death for sin, yet the mercy of God accepted of a surety to die in the stead of the principal offenders. Why must this more important design of sacrifice be only expressed, if the other, which is far less, were the only thing that was meant? Would not this lead almost every common reader into a great mistake about the design of the death of Christ?

I would enquire earnestly of the friends of Agrippa, if the ideas of the holy apostles and of Christ himself went no further in all their sacrificial expressions concerning Christ, than to tell us what sin deserved, why do they not speak these ideas in proper language, more plainly, directly, and expressly? Why should such phrases be so frequently used, as "making atonement for sin, reconciling us to God by his death, and taking away our sins by his sacrifice," if the scripture meant no more than to shew us what sin deserves? Is it not strange that neither Christ nor his apostles should ever once use that expression among all their speeches or writings, or ever once tell us that the death of Christ was confined to this design, if it really designed nothing more? Besides, did not all the bloody sacrifices which were offered under the law, which are said *to make atonement for*

sin, discover that sin deserved death? And what did the death of Christ do more than they?

When man had sinned at first, did not God appoint sacrifices to be slain in the room of the sinner, not only to shew what sin deserved, but thereupon he granted the sinner a visible continuance in life, to shew that his guilt was transferred to the animal which was sacrificed? Had not all the whole train of expiatory sacrifices from Adam down to Christ, this same signification? And yet we are told, Heb. x. 4. *It is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats should really take away sin*, that is, remove the guilt of our sins from before God, who is judge and Lord of conscience. What did they do then? Why, they did that typically and in a way of emblem, which the blood of the Son of God was to do really and effectually. It is very plain, that the sacrifice of Christ was to effect that which all the Mosaical sacrifices could not do: It was to remove from men such moral guilt as the Jewish sacrifices could not remove, and justify us from that guilt, from *which the law of Moses could not justify us*; Acts xiii. 39. The Jewish sacrifices themselves did not only shew the desert of sin, but, as I have said before, did make a real and proper atonement for civil or ceremonial faults and defilements in the sight of God as their political Lord and the king of the nation, and freed the sinner from civil punishment; and they did also make a typical atonement for the moral guilt of the offender before God, as the Lord and judge of souls and consciences, that is, they were the types of such an atonement. And though these types were not much understood by the Jews of old, yet they were to be accomplished and fulfilled by the bloody sacrifice of the Son of God, or his offering up his own life in the room of sinners; and it is by this bloody sacrifice of our Saviour, that the moral guilt of sin is really removed from the souls and consciences of true christians, as the ceremonial defilements or political guilt of an Israelite was taken away by the blood of bulls and goats. All these meaner sacrifices would be sufficient to shew that sin deserved death; but it requires such a dignity of person as was found only with the Son of God, to take away our sins, that is, *to make a real atonement for the moral guilt of the souls of men*, of which all the former were but shadows and figures.

Before Paulinus had proceeded further with his several queries to Agrippa, Ferventio stopped him with this speech: *Sir, there is another erroneous sense put upon the strong and plain expressions of scripture, concerning Christ's making an atonement or propitiation for sin by his sufferings and death:* Dr. Whitby calls it a *Socinian gloss* in his annotations on 1 Pet. ii. 25. and represents it in these words; they say *Christ took away our sins by his own body crucified upon the* cross, procuring our

absolution from them by his sufferings; not that he underwent the punishment of our transgressions, but because his voluntary death prevailed with God to give him power to absolve his servants at the last, and to reward them with eternal glory. And I am told, saith Ferventio, this opinion grows much in vogue in our days, both in preaching, in writing and conversation; and some people are not ashamed to pronounce and defend it as the truest and justest sense of these scriptural phrases, though they have not yet found out one single text in all the bible where this is the plain meaning of any of those expressions. Now, Sir, I would be glad to hear from your lips what are your best arguments to refute this *Socinian gloss* as Dr. Whitby calls it.

I would say these three things, answered Paulinus: First, It is very strange that this must be the true sense of these sacrificial phrases, when this sense does not appear plainly in any one scripture. However if it must be so, let it be so in the Old Testament as well as in the New; let there be some shadow of it found among the Levitical and typical sacrifices of atonement, as well as in Jesus the substantial one; otherwise the types and the substance will have no likeness to one another in those very actions and circumstances, whereby atonement for sin is made and which are ascribed to both type and substance in the same phrases. Now let these interpreters tell me, which of the sheep or the goats, which of the rams or the bulls, that were sacrificed to atone for sin, ever received power to absolve sinners, or ever were made judges or rewarders in any sense. It is very evident that so far as this forced sense is introduced upon the expressions of *Christ's bearing our sins on the cross*, and his *making atonement for sin*, so far there is an utter departure from the true and obvious meaning of the same expressions, when applied to the typical sacrifices; whereas in the sense which I have given, the same ideas belong both to the typical and the substantial atonement. Dr. Whitby's expositions of the twenty-fourth and twenty-fifth verses of this chapter sufficiently explain and confirm the true meaning of St. Peter's language. Besides, let it be observed in the second place, that *the scripture ascribes this atonement of Christ to the office of his priesthood, to his blood, and his death as a sacrifice*, whereas these mistaken interpreters ascribe his taking away sin, either to his doctrine as a prophet, which has been before answered, or in this present sense to his royal power of forgiveness as a king, without ever considering that the beasts which were made atoning sacrifices afford us no shadow of Christ's taking away sin by his prophetical or his kingly office, but only by his priesthood and sacrifice: Nor is there any other way, besides that which I have maintained, to make the scriptures of truth abide in any happy harmony, or the type and the substance to agree.

Paulinus added yet further, I would say again in the third place, would the Jews to whom the gospel of a crucified Christ was first preached in the days of the apostles have understood these phrases of *taking away sin by sacrifice*, or *making atonement for sin* in this Socinian sense? And surely this gospel was preached and written by the apostles in such expressions, as the Jews might readily and easily understand: Surely they would so express their doctrine as that their hearers in Judea should receive the most common and obvious sense of the words as they were used in their nation; otherwise the *gospel would be hidden* and lost to them.

Again let us enquire of the heathens among whom the apostles preached this gospel, and who had been used to sacrifices and atonements; let us ask of them, whether they would understand those sacrificial phrases in this strange sense? Would they ever imagine that their sins were atoned for by the death of Christ, merely because God the Father was so well pleased with his submission to death, for which death they yet give no sufficient reason, that he raised him to life again, and gave him power to forgive the sins of men? Was this their meaning of atonement when they spoke of and practised their own making atonement to their gods for sin by the sacrifice either of beasts or men? And why should this be supposed to be the sense of the apostles in preaching the gospel which neither Jews nor Heathens used, and which neither of them would readily understand?

There is no christian denies this truth, *that God did raise Christ from the dead, and give him power to forgive sins*; but this is not the meaning of his atoning for sin, which is ever ascribed to his blood and death, but never to his life and kingdom. It was after "he had purged away sins by himself, that is, by the sacrifice of himself;" Heb. ix. 26. "That he sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on High, and received his kingdom and power;" Heb. i. 3. But to return to my paper of queries; I must now intreat your excuse for dwelling upon these representations of things too long, and perhaps for rehearsing them too often: But as I am sensible of the great importance of the contest that is between us, I am content to be called a "repeater," if I may be so happy as to hit the soul of the man who hears or reads this in a right vein, and convey the doctrine of the propitiation of Christ for sin with some light and force to the mind by all this variety of expression, and this repetition of ideas.

Here I desire it may be observed, that several of the queries which I have made concerning the *atonement of our sins by the death of Christ*, might be also made with the same justice concerning the *sanctification of our natures by the Holy Spirit:* which two great doctrines are eminently and peculiarly some of the prime subjects and glories of the gospel, and are equally left

out of Agrippa's creed. Can Agrippa ever suppose that all the illustrious and magnificent expressions which are used concerning the work of the Spirit of God on the souls of men, to subdue their sins, " to give them new hearts, to change their temper into holiness, and to comfort them by shedding abroad a sense of the love of God in their hearts," can be construed into a mere philosophical love and practice of virtue and piety, raised by the rational consideration of those truths which were taught the apostles by the instruction of the Holy Spirit, or which were confirmed among men by his extraordinary gifts? Is this all the meaning of our being *regenerated or born again of the Holy Spirit?* John iii. 3, 5. Is this the sense of those promises in Ezekiel and Zechary, " I will put a new spirit within you, or I will put my Spirit in you, and cause you to walk in my statutes;" Ezek. xxxvi. 26, 27. " I will pour out my Spirit upon the house of Israel; I will pour upon the house of David the spirit of grace and of supplication, and they shall look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn;" Zech. xii. 10. And when Christ says, *Your heavenly Father shall give his Holy Spirit to them that ask him*; Luke xi. 13. *He that believeth in me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters, which Christ spake of the Spirit, the Comforter, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father shall send*, says he, *in my name; he shall teach you all things, shall guide you into all truth, shall abide with you for ever;* John vii. 38, 39. xiv. 16, 26. xvi. 13. I grant indeed some of the expressions have a prime reference to the extraordinary gifts of the apostles, but others plainly belong to all christians, and perhaps all of them are applicable in a secondary sense to every true disciple of Christ.

But I proceed with the queries. Is this all the meaning of the apostle Paul, when he says, " The love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost;" Rom. v. 5. " He that hath not the Spirit of Christ is none of his;—as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God; the Spirit helpeth our infirmities, for we know not what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us;" Rom. viii. 9, 14, 26. " Through Christ we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father;" Eph. ii. 18. " If ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live;" Rom. viii. 13. " We through the Spirit, wait for the hope of righteousness by faith;" Gal. v. 5. " God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through the sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;" 2 Thess. ii. 13. " Saved us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;" Tit. iii. 5. And does St. Peter mean no more than extraordinary gifts, when he says, *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father through sanctification of the Spirit unto*

obedience; 1 Pet. i. 2. and in verse 22. *Ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit?* And does St. John mean only the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit, when he speaks to all christians, to fathers, young men and children, and tells them, *Ye have an unction from the Holy One which abideth in you, and teacheth you all things*, that is, all things necessary to salvation; 1 John ii. 20, 27. And many other expressions there are of this kind which are scattered through the New Testament: "No man can say Jesus is Lord, but by the Holy Spirit;" 1 Cor. xii. 3. "Ye are the epistle of Christ written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God;" 2 Cor. iii. 3. "If the Spirit of him that raised Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he—shall quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you;" Rom. viii. 11. "Ye are builded together for a habitation of God through the Spirit;" Ephes ii. 22. with many and various phrases to the same purpose. And is not the gospel itself supposed on this account to be called the *ministration of the Spirit:* 2 Cor. iii. 8. Let me enquire now, would it not be a very difficult and painful task for any man of just reasoning, and a sincere conscience to interpret all these scripture-expressions concerning the work of the Holy Spirit on men in a just conformity to Agrippa's creed, and confine them all to extraordinary gifts, merely as an evidence of the truth of the gospel at the first promulgation of it to the world? What! have we had nothing to do with the operations of the Spirit of God in the New Testament for these sixteen hundred years? Were all the promises of the Old Testament, concerning the blessed Spirit so entirely fulfilled in the first age of christianity, that we have nothing now to expect from them? Are all the comforts of this Spirit in the New Testament spent and exhausted, so that none of them remain for christians in our day? And is the same gospel now become a spiritless gospel to men, without a divine converter, or a divine comforter?

VII. In the seventh place I would ask leave to put this question also to Agrippa and his friends. Are not the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's-supper generally and justly esteemed to be comprehensive emblems of the peculiar glories of christianity, and were they not instituted to keep in mind the chief and most special blessings of the gospel, the peculiar and important doctrines of the blessed Jesus? Now what is it these two sacraments represent to us? Does not baptism design to exhibit the purification of our souls from sin, and the change of our tempers to holiness by the Spirit of God, which is represented as *rivers of water, as clean water, either poured out or sprinkled upon us;* Ezek. xxxvi. 25. which shall make us clean and holy? And in allusion to this, does not Christ himself tell us, that *we must be born of water and of the Spirit, if ever we would see the*

kingdom of God: John iii. 5. That we must be washed and purified from our sinful habits by the Spirit of God, and become penitent and holy in heart and life? And that we must enter into the profession of christianity by baptism as the symbol of this inward and divine purification? But where is this to be found in the creed of Agrippa?

The other ceremony of the gospel is the *Lord's-supper;* and what does this represent in the institution of it by our blessed Saviour? Does not he himself tell us in the form of this institution, that it is the representation of his own *body which was broken for us* by wounds upon the cross, *and his* own *blood which was shed* there *for the remission of sins;* Mat. xxvi. 28. under the two plain emblems of bread and wine? But are not these sacred representations of such important truths explained away by a forced construction of the words? Can such strong expressions of a dying Redeemer receive due honour by a confinement of them to a mere memorial of a dying martyr to confirm his doctrine, or by sinking them to a mere figurative manifestation of what sin deserved, without any proper expiation of it? Would an expiring prophet utter such speeches as would naturally lead his disciples into so great a mistake? Would the Saviour of the world in his last conversation with his friends, betray them into such superstitious errors as Agrippa supposes the doctrine of his atonement for sin to be? Would his wisdom and his goodness either incline or permit him to tell his disciples so expressly, that *his blood was shed for the remission of their sins,* and mean no more by it than Agrippa does?

VIII. After I had proved by the force of the former queries, that the gospel doth evidently reveal this doctrine of *Christ's atonement for sin, and our sanctification by the Holy Spirit,* then to confirm this yet further, I would enquire of Agrippa in the next place, what were the most necessary and most important blessings which mankind in their sinful and miserable estate stood in need of, and which accordingly the gospel reveals and bestows? Tell me, Agrippa, what are our chief necessities, and what are the chief favours which we want from heaven? Do we not find ourselves guilty before God by our many iniquities and violations of his holy law? Do not our hearts accuse and condemn us? And do we not stand in need of divine forgiveness? Is not the awakened conscience of man in his natural estate, solicitous how he shall obtain pardon of the great God? Has not this been the enquiry of thoughtful persons in all ages. *Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the most high God* with acceptance? Micah vi. 6. Has there not been a general tradition among Jews and Gentiles, that the anger of God was to be removed by sacrifices, or the putting to death of some animal creature in the room of criminal

:n? Whence came this universal tradition? Whence this neral sense of mankind, that there must be an atonement for made by sacrifices? It does not look like the invention of in, as Porphyry has shewn long ago, to cut living creatures pieces, and burn their entrails, in order to please his Ma- r. Is it not highly probable therefore that it was some ginal institution of God, or divine appointment, attended th a promise or encouragement to hope for mercy from an ended God? And what could such sacrifices of brute crea- es signify to this purpose; but as they were figures of some re valuable and richer sacrifice? And is not this the very ng which the gospel of Christ reveals, and hereby answers the icitous and anxious enquiries of guilty men? Even that there forgiveness to be found with God, and that the sacrifice of nement is his own Son, *by whom we have redemption from nishment in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins through the hes of his grace.*

Again, what is the next chief concern and enquiry of an akened soul? I find my nature prone to sin, my senses and sions lead me astray from the inward dictates of my duty: mptations in this world are great and many, my own strength resist them is but weakness, they prevail over me notwithstand- all my better resolutions. Is there no assistance in this diffi- lt work to be obtained from heaven, whereby I may keep my- f from the defilements of a sinful world, and serve and please Maker and my God? And is not this also another blessing ich the gospel reveals? Even the Spirit of God promised to rtify our sins, to renew our souls to holiness, to sanctify and reform us to a heavenly temper, to enable us in some asure to do our present duty here, and fit us for the en- ment of God hereafter. Thus that sacred book, the New stament, discovers to us those two most eminent and impor- it blessings which an awakened sinner feels himself to stand need of; and yet Agrippa has left them both out of his ed.

IX. Since the gospel has revealed these two blessings in ch express language for the relief of sinful man: What is ere in the description or proposal of them in the gospel that s cross to the dictates of right reason? What is there in the eral sense of these doctrines that is contrary to the nature or rfections of God, or disagreeable to the reason of man? What there that should constrain us to construe them into a meta- orical sense, and to explain them merely as figures and em- ems? It is granted indeed, that the reason of man could not d them out; yet when once they are revealed and proposed to , do they not appear very consistent with our best reasonings out God or man, and consistent also with all other parts of di- ne revelation?

It must be confessed there are some things so described in scripture, as makes it necessary to explain them by the help of tropes and figures; as for instance, there are several expressions which represent God to us as *seeing with his eyes, as hearing with his ears, as working with his hands, as rejoicing, as grieving, as repenting, &c.* and these cannot be understood in their literal sense, because it is contrary to the nature of God who is a Spirit, contrary to our reason in our best apprehensions of God, and it is also contrary to other places of scripture where God is declared to be *a Spirit* who hath no bodily parts or passions: And these are sufficient arguments to constrain us to forsake the literal sense, and to construe these expressions in scripture as mere figures and resemblances of divine things, spoken after the manner of men. So in the Lord's-supper, when Christ says, *this bread is my body*, it cannot be understood in the literal sense, because it is contrary to the testimony of our senses, our reason, and the scripture, that the body of Christ should be handled and eaten by the apostles, and yet at the same time be sitting at the table and eating with them, with a hundred other absurdities which attend the popish doctrine of transubstantiation; it must be therefore a figurative expression, and it is hard to conceive how any reasonable and honest mind should mistake the true meaning, viz. *this bread is the sign or figure of my body.* But in the plain scriptural doctrines of the atonement of Christ for sin, and the assistances or influences of the blessed Spirit towards the restoring of our natures to holiness, there is nothing absurd, nothing inconsistent with reason, or with other scriptures, so as to make it necessary to construe them by tropes and figures. This may be made sufficiently to appear, if we ask but a few questions on each of these subjects. And first, of the *atonement of Christ for our sins.* Is it not a most reasonable thing that a penalty should be annexed to the transgression of God's holy law, in order to deter men from sinning against God? Is not death a proper punishment for sin? Hath not the transgressor well deserved it? Is not the execution of this threatening a proper means to secure the honour of God's authority, his justice, and his government of the world? but is there no room for mercy to interpose and save here and there a criminal? May not divine justice receive the same honour, and the authority and government of God be as effectually secured in the world, by making it appear that sin is punished, and the penalty executed upon a willing and avowed surety, as if the sinner himself were punished? Will not the world learn hereby how dangerous a thing it is to transgress the law of God, when it appears that even mercy itself will not release the sinner without some atoning sacrifice, without some demonstration of the justice of the law of God, and his hatred of sin? And when so glorious a person, and one so dear to God as his own Son, becomes the surety, how doth

s more abundantly manifest that God will not spare wilful minals, since even his own Son must be smitten when he bees a surety for the sinner, rather than sin should go unpuhed? I would ask yet further,

Why Agrippa should think this doctrine unreasonable? Is suretiship for debts a common thing among men? Is it not ictised daily? And is not the surety seized, and the debt exed from him, if the principal debtor be insolvent? Is he not de to suffer imprisonment, and all the hardships of it on the ount of the principal? And is not the debtor discharged if surety pays the debt? In criminal cases indeed suretiship iot so frequent among men, for they have not such absolute ver over the life or limbs of themselves or others, or have y so much love for their friends. But what good reason is re, or can there be, why the Son of God, who had power er his own life, and whose compassion to guilty man was exding great, might not become his surety, and suffer death in stead, that is, pay the debt of suffering which the sinful ature owed to a just God? Is there not hereby a new and isible honour done both to the mercy and justice of God the versal Governor arising from this contrivance of his wisdom, punish sin on such a surety, and yet to save sinful creatures, h which could hardly have been glorified any other way? r if the penalties had been fully executed on the sinner, mercy uld have lost its honours; or if the sinner had been pardoned hout an atonement, the justice and authority of God the vernor, would seem to have been too much neglected and honoured. Thus this doctrine of atonement is so far from ninishing the honour of the attributes of God, that it highly alts them.

As to the second doctrine, viz. *the influences of the Spirit God to sanctify our nature*, what is there more agreeable to ison than this? When God saw the weakness of his creature in since the fall, to change his own nature into holiness, and fulfil his duty, how agreeable is it to our best apprehensions of e mercy of God, to suppose that he would afford some divine ls to those who seek them? That he would graciously assist e feeble endeavours of his creatures to repent of sin, and to end their lives in obedience to their Maker, and that by the erations of his own Spirit; and that by this Spirit of his he uld enable weak creatures to overcome their powerful temptans? But I am very brief in these enquiries, because the obtions against these doctrines have been often and abundantly isfied in answers that have been given to Socinian writers in rmer and later times. Since therefore there is no necessary ason that requires us to construe these scriptural expressions to tropes and figures, why should we not understand the divine

descriptions of these blessings of the gospel in their ow evident and proper sense? Why should not Agrippa unde them as we do in their plain meaning, since I am per Agrippa wants them as much as we? Why does he not h receive them, and live upon them as the favours of a conde ing God? Or let him him boldly declare, that he does no them, and therefore he cannot believe them.

X. And now the very last enquiry I shall put to A and his friends, is this, which I mentioned before in my disc when you turn these peculiar glories and blessings of the into tropes and figures, what is it you aim at, or expect t by it? What is the advantage pretended or hoped for by a force upon the scripture, but by stripping the religion of of its peculiar honours, to make it appear more like the re of nature, both to ourselves and our infidel acquaintance give me leave to ask in the name of God, why are we so ashamed of these peculiar and supernatural glories of the pel, which were sent from heaven as the choicest blessing wretched world? Must all the revealed doctrines of Go his Son be brought down to the relish and gust of infidels fore we who call ourselves christians dare to believe them there no truth of God to be credited unless it square with opinions? Why should we be so solicitous to avoid the di sure of those who deny and ridicule these articles of faith, are the obvious and sacred meaning of the words of scri and which are given us to be *the life of our souls?* Wh we so fond to please and flatter those men who deny the plai express doctrines of the New Testament, and destroy the natural sense and design of the two sacraments, the two ceremonies of the christian religion? Why so zealou foolish to compliment the professed adversaries of Christ a blessed gospel at so dear a rate, as to part with the noblest fa of heaven to humour and please them?

To conclude, if these were doctrines or propositions mentioned occasionally, and but once or twice in the bibl they were only taught in emblems and metaphors and dark phecies: if they were only hinted in the warm and pathetic of scripture, and never mentioned in those places wher doctrines of christianity were professedly taught; if they preached only by one apostle, or only written in one part epistle; if they were such doctrines as stood contrary to th ture of God or the reason of man; if they received no testi or support from the former revelations of God, or from parts of the divine dispensations towards men, a honest studious man might be ready to suspect, whether the w which express them ought to be construed in the literal se or at least, whether they were articles of any importance in c

tianity. But when this scheme of truth is spoken of by Christ himself as far as was proper in his life-time, and that both in parables and in plain language; when it is plainly taught by Peter and John as well as Paul, and that not only in one part of their writings, but in almost every place where the great doctrines of christianity are designedly taught, and where such truths might properly be inserted; when their epistles are full of this language wheresoever they speak of the great and important doctrines of the gospel, or of the practical uses of them; when it is foretold by the ancient prophets, prefigured in the chief ceremonies of the ancient church, and held forth in the sacraments of the New Testament; I say, when I put all these things together, and others which I have mentioned as proofs of these two eminent articles of christianity, I am so overpowered with evidence concerning the true and plain meaning of the language of scripture, that I am ready to wonder how it is possible for any man of reason in the sincere exercise of it, to read the New Testament, and not see there these great articles of the *atonement for our sins by the blood of Christ, and the sanctification of our hearts by the Holy Spirit.*

I would therefore entreat Agrippa and his friends to consider once again, whether they may not be mistaken in their strange interpretations of the word of God. I would entreat them once again to read the gospels and epistles with a honest heart and without prejudice or bias from their former opinions. And with their studies let them join their earnest supplications to the great God to guard them from error, and lead them into all truth; and at the same time let them maintain a pious resolution to subject their belief and conscience to every thing that shall appear to be the plain meaning of God in his word: *He giveth wisdom to them that ask it: he giveth to those who are good in his sight, wisdom, understanding, and knowledge;* Eccl. ii. 26. He bestows wisdom on the humble, and the meek will be guide in his way: he will shew them the secret of his covenant, and lead them into his salvation; Ps. xxv. 9, 24.

Sect. III.—*The Importance of the Doctrine of Christ's Atonement for Sin argued.*

Cavenor was one of the friends and disciples of Agrippa, though Paulinus knew it not. When he heard these queries of Paulinus, he was struck with a sensible surprize to find the whole current of scripture run so contrary to the opinions he had lately embraced, and he now confessed he had never well considered these matters before. The case in short was this: He had fallen into company with some persons who were almost weary of christianity, and had dropped as much of it as their consciences would let them part with at once: He was too easily led away from his former faith by the ridicule which was often cast by the disciples

or friends of Agrippa on these doctrines which Pau fended: He was borne down by the bounces and boast reasoning, which they never failed to make, and w they pretended, lay all on their side. However, he s present astonished to observe, that the glorious designs and his grace in the gospel, led us plainly into othe doctrines than what is contained in Agrippa's creed, a cularly that concerning *the atonement of Christ for* could not at once freely and utterly renounce his error was a little afraid to persist in them. He felt a sensible about his eternal interests, and fell to enquiring, upon tion that this scheme of Agrippa concerning the desig death of Christ should prove to be a mistake, whethe not an innocent error. *Are there not many mistakes, concerning some truths of the christian religion, and c the sense of many texts in the New Testament, which pardonable things? And what greater mischief is there ing the proper atonement of Christ than in many other opinions which Paulinus himself would grant might be and embraced very innocently, and without danger to o tianity?*

Ferventio, who was a very warm and zealous de the common faith, and much in the same sentiments wi nus, as to the doctrines of the gospel, immediately when he heard Cavenor ask such a question as this: *W chief, says he, is there in these opinions?* There is a l dreadful train of mighty mischiefs in them, there is a pearance of infidelity, and a large step toward it: T bold affront offered to scripture in some of its plainest re and a denial of the blessed gospel in some of its chief There is unspeakable injury done to the honour of Go his justice and his grace, there is a sinking of the dign Son of God, as a dying Mediator, into a mere prophet ness; and there is a dreadful risk and hazard to th men, by encouraging them to venture into the presenc without a sacrifice. This is not a little dispute about t relations of the atonement of Christ to our pardon; no the sufferings and death of Christ as a propitiatio must be properly imputed to us, or whether we must r their merit merely as the price of a salvation purchased This is not *a strife about words*, nor a lesser controve ther faith is an instrument to receive this atonement, or tion of having the fruits of it bestowed upon us: No, t here is, *whether our Lord Jesus Christ made any a for sin at all or no, by all his sufferings? And wh death laid any such sort of foundation for our hope don?* We may bear with a hundred errors and mistak lesser things of christianity, the doubtful disputables i

and practice, as the apostle calls them; Rom. xiv. 1—6. These may be safely debated on both sides among wise and humble christians of different sentiments; but I hope the doctrine of the *proper atonement of Christ for sin* shall never be numbered among the doubtful disputables: I own I have such a formidable idea of the denial of it, that I can hardly think such a gross error ought to be borne with in a christian church, where it is openly avowed and maintained in opposition to so many express scriptures. Let us but take a more particular survey of the mischiefs of this opinion, and then let Cavenor tell me whether it be such a harmless mistake as he imagines.

First, Is not a denial of the propitiation of Christ for sin a very evident renunciation of one of the chief glories and blessings of christianity? And to make this appear, I would enquire, was not this doctrine one of those noble and needful revelations brought to us by the gospel of Christ, which, as Paulinus has intimated, the heathen philosophers never knew, and which the reason of man could never find out? Is it not such a complete atonement and such a divine medium of obtaining pardon of sin and peace with God, which all the Gentile world seemed to want, and which they sought for in vain among their endless inventions of ceremonies and rites, and bloody sacrifices, and which the Jews themselves were acquainted with but in an imperfect manner by the types and figures of their law? Where is the religion that can propose such a relief for a guilty conscience, such a balm as this for the broken heart of a penitent offender? And does not the denial of it sink the gospel of Christ in this respect almost down to the level of heathen philosophy and to the religion of nature, whereby a sincere penitent might derive some kind of hope of the forgiveness of sin from the mere mercy of a God? Nor indeed does it leave us so much of this divine doctrine for the comfort of mourning penitents, as the Jews themselves enjoyed under their veils and emblems, and smoaking sacrifices.

In the two last centuries, when the doctrine of Socinus prevailed in some parts of Europe, who denied the satisfaction of Christ for sin, our fathers were wont to charge it with a reduction of christianity to a sort of mahumetism; for the Turks confess Christ to be a great prophet; they believe the pardon of sin, and the resurrection of the dead, and the future recompences of heaven and hell: But how much more does the scripture teach of the way to obtain salvation than the Alcoran does, if the doctrine of the proper sacrifice of Christ be set aside, with all the blessed truths and duties which are derived from it? The socinian error, saith Doctor Arrowsmith in his *Tactica Sacra*, *is more properly called a subtle mahumetism, and it opens its mouth as a whirlpool of irreligion.* And Grotius himself in

his epistle to Wallæus, speaking of the socinians, upon this account will not allow them the title of christians; *for they have preserved*, says he, *christianity in the name, but they have destroyed the thing; and therefore I can make but little difference between them and the Makometans, who never speak evil of Christ.*

The papists, who have corrupted christianity beyond all that ever went before them, yet have not debased it to this extreme degree; for though they have introduced their fastings and scourgings and various penances to make a sort of satisfaction for their sins, yet they never renounced the proper atonement and satisfaction of Christ, but always maintained that doctrine in honourable language; and they lay the foundation even of all the merit of their own mortifications, and their devotions upon the superior merit of the Son of God: But Agrippa and his party in this respect are worse than the papists themselves, for they renounce and cancel the merit of the death of Christ, and exclude it from making any atonement at all for the sins of men.

In the present age the late Doctor Samuel Clarke, though he hath publicly departed from the common faith in his book written on the *Doctrine of the Trinity*, yet still he maintains the *satisfaction and atonement of Christ*, and has vindicated it in his treatise of *Revealed Religion*, and in several of his sermons which have been printed since his death. He tells us, in the fourth volume, page 122, that *the sacrifice of the death of Christ, which is the foundation of God's accepting our repentance, consistently with the honours of his divine laws, was inestimably the greatest blessing that ever was conferred on the sons of men: yea, the fountain and spring, and the original foundation of all other blessings.* Now what could Doctor Clarke think of their religion who deny the very foundation of God's accepting our repentance, who deny that which is the greatest blessing of God to men, and the original fountain of all others? Or what shall we think of such a doctrine, or such a sort of christianity as this?

I must confess, in my opinion, says Ferventio, Doctor Clarke, as great a man as he was, talked very inconsistently in maintaining the doctrine of the *satisfaction of Christ for sin*, while he denied his true divinity; for where is sufficient excellency in the person to make such atonement, if it be not founded in supreme godhead?

Cavenor was a little warmed to see so great a writer accused as absurd and inconsistent. I will not pretend, says he, to defend Doctor Clarke's sentiments about the person of Christ or about his sacrifice of atonement; but this I may venture to say, there is no such inconsistency between them as you imagine: Does the scripture expressly say, it is supreme godhead in our blessed

ıviour that alone can make atonement for sin? Where does at text stand? Now since Doctor Clarke allows him to be so cellent a being, as to be employed by the Father in making this ›rld and all the inhabitants of it; is there not worth and merit ough in the Maker to die as a ransom for the things that he ıde? Is he not a being of sufficient dignity to redeem a world mankind by his death, when they are all the works of his hands? ıt this only by the way: I would not divert the current of your ıl: Nor would I, says Ferventio, suffer this to go unanswer- ; but I must now proceed to shew what other mischiefs are ıtained in a denial of the atonement of Christ.

Secondly. Is it not a foul dishonour and injury to the holy v of God, as well as an affront to the wisdom, the authority, d the justice of the law-giver, to take away from him that ble and glorious satisfaction which the death of Christ has ıde for the sins of men? Does not this denial of his atone- :nt construe his death either into a mere martyrdom, or at best o an empty sign and figure of what sin deserved? For Agrip- does not seem to have any notion of the mercy and justice of ›d accepting of a surety instead of the death of the original :nder, and thereby consenting to forgive his offences. Was s all the Son of God died for, to be a sign and figure of what deserved? These are useful things in religion when they are 'ented and appointed of God, as emblems and types of that ıre substantial and more important sacrifice which should ɔctually take away sin from the conscience: Such a sign and ure was *the blood of bulls and goats*, which were slain under : Levitical dispensation; and it is honour enough for bulls and ats to have their blood made a shadow or type of such a sacri- :. But it is certainly a dishonour to the great God and his n, to sink the design of the death of Christ to so low a pur- se; it is high dishonour to have those great, important, and ›stantial things, viz. the bloody and painful death of the blessed sus, and the real atonement which was made for sin thereby, d which was the price of the ransom of our souls, reduced only a figure and sign of the punishment which sin deserved, with- t any real expiation of it: And hereby the sins of men are pposed to be forgiven without any reparation of the dishonour ne to the law of God.

Thirdly, This doctrine of Agrippa, which denies the pro- :iation of Christ, staggers the faith of a humble penitent chris- n, it breaks in upon his hope, it unhinges his soul in its daily ınsactions with God, it weakens his efforts in duty, and con- ınds his sweetest consolations: For he has been instructed by e plain language of the New Testament, to build his eternal ›pes on the atoning sacrifice of the Son of God, and to draw s surest expectations of pardon from thence. He has been

taught to *draw near to God in prayer by the blood of Jesus, in this new and living way which he has consecrated for us*; Heb. x. 19, 20. He has been taught to ask *forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ, or for his sake*; Eph. iv. 32. and *to trust in the blood of Jesus as a propitiation which cleanses from all sin*; Rom. iii. 25. 1 John i. 7, 9. The prophets, the apostles, and the Son of God himself seem all to conspire to teach him this lesson, and to have pointed out to him this hope and refuge. What trembling and terrors will it bring into his conscience, and how will it shake his soul off from her solid and peaceful foundation, when he shall be told that the death of Christ made no proper atonement for sin, and that his hopes which were built upon it were all vain and groundless, for that the language of the scripture must be construed quite to another meaning. It was under the influence of this sacred truth, that he had arrived to a stability of peace, and attained to a considerable degree of holiness arising from the love of a forgiving God, and a suffering Saviour. He could not but believe what St. John told him, that *if we confess our sins, and walk in the light of holiness, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanses us from all unrighteousness*; 1 John i. 7, 9. He believed the lesson St. Paul taught him, *that Christ was set forth for a propitiation for sin by faith in his blood*; Rom. iii. 25. and his encouragement to hope for pardoning mercy upon such a foundation, was much stronger and more effectual to relieve his guilty fears, while the blood of the Son of God appeared in scripture as a medium of atonement for the sins of men. *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of a humble and believing penitent, when God will justify upon this foot? Who shall condemn when Christ has died to procure pardon?* But he is quite confounded if this hope be vain.

The humble christian has been taught to rejoice in life and in death with these words upon his lips, and the sense of the love of God has been shed abroad in many a heart by faith in a dying Saviour, *who has made peace by his own blood.* This has kindled through all the powers of a good man a warm and ingenuous love to God and Christ; to God, who sent his own beloved Son to die as a sacrifice for his sins, and to *Jesus Christ who loved him, and gave himself to death for him*: And this love rising from a sense of the death of Christ for his salvation has richly abounded unto all the duties of holiness. Gratitude to a Redeemer who hath died in his stead, hath constrained him to spend his life to his honour, as 2 Cor. v. 15. *He died for all, that they who live should not live to themselves, but to him who died for them.* But what agonies, and what new amazement must overwhelm the spirit of such a pious man when he is informed that neither Paul nor John are to be understood in this sense, and that Christ

ever died with design to make a proper atonement for his sins? ow will his hopes languish, his addresses to God flag and fail, nd the springs of his love and obedience be weakened, when he deprived of the doctrine which hath all along been the life of s faith, the language of his prayer, and the support of his hope, nd which he thought he had built upon the most express and ndeniable testimony of the word of God? What can I believe, ith he, if this be not true? Or what have I to rest upon, if his foundation be destroyed.

Fourthly, This new doctrine of Agrippa, does it not shamefully diminish and debase the glorious design of the incarnation f the Son of God? Does it not sink the condescension of so divine a person to so low a degree, that one of the ancient prophets raised from the dead, or a new prophet brought upon the tage of the world, might almost, if not altogether, have supplied his place? Was this all that a being of such transcendent excellency as the Son of God, must come down from heaven for? What? Must the Son of God himself be exposed to so much pain and shame, and go through so many humiliations; must he suffer so many indignities, and endure such a bloody and painful death, merely to become a martyr or witness of the truth of such doctrines as a meaner prophet might have taught the world, and might have confirmed them with his death, or sealed them with his blood? Or was this cursed death of the blessed Jesus designed for no nobler a purpose than what *the blood of bulls and goats* continually performed, that is, to teach mankind in a way of emblem that sin deserved death? But Paulinus having intimated the dishonour of such sentiments, I pursue it no further, but proceed,

Fifthly, This opinion of Agrippa concerning the death and sufferings of Christ, by taking away one of the chief glories of christianity, renders the christian religion a thing of much less value and importance. Instead of ingratiating the New Testament with infidels, and reconciling their minds to it by explaining away some of its noblest revelations, it will probably have a contrary effect upon many of them, and tempt them to say, *What is the New Testament worth, if it tells me so little more than the light of nature teaches? Why so much pains and labour, so much criticism and toilsome argument, such warm and vehement zeal to support the divine authority of the New Testament, and the religion of Christ, if we learn no more from it than Agrippa's creed?* And thus one of the chief designs or pretences of Agrippa and his friends is lost thereby, which was to bring christianity into esteem with the deists, by sinking the doctrines of it almost to a level with natural religion. Agrippa's creed has debased it so far, that infidelity may take no disgust at it, and so far stripped it of its fairest honours, till the infidel shall say,

there is but little in our religion that differs from his, and that he is better without a gospel than with it, since it makes such a pother to so little purpose.

And indeed there are some persons, who by suffering themselves to be seduced into Agrippa's scheme. have already learned to undervalue the writings of the blessed Paul, though he was the greatest and best of all the divine writers. They find so much of the atonement of Christ in his epistles, that they reject them at once because they will not believe this doctrine. They represent him as a Jew of a warm imagination, an enthusiast with his head full of propitiations, sacrifices, and other pharisaical notions, to such a degree that he deserves no regard, and that the New Testament would be much better without his writings. Another step, and the gospels will be turned out too, when they have learned of the deists to say, that the sermons and speeches of Christ, so far as they are rational and intelligible, contain nothing but mere natural religion; the rest is all enthusiasm, and it is not worth while to defend any of these gospels as divine. Thus the belief of Agrippa's creed has an evident tendency to make men disbelieve the New Testament itself.

Sixthly, When we refuse to receive a doctrine which is so clearly and expressly revealed in the word of God, as the atonement of Christ is; when we are are taught to deny a doctrine which is so strongly asserted there, and so frequently introduced and repeated upon every occasion, it evidently abates that veneration which even christians themselves have or should have for the New Testament, though it should not prevail so far as to turn them into infidels. It teaches men to grow too bold with scripture, and twist it to any purposes: It disgraces the word of the living God, and sinks the character of it into *a mere leaden rule, as the papists call it, which may be bent to serve or support any opinion.* It tempts us to turn the brightest discoveries, and the peculiar glories of it into mere lessons of morality. When we explain away one of the most evident and substantial doctrines of it at this rate, it gives us a sort of effrontery and ungodly courage to oppose the most express truths which are written in scripture, if we can possibly construe and translate them into another sense. It introduces a sort of profane hardiness into the conscience, and emboldens us to renounce the most evident lessons of St. Peter, Paul, and John, and deny the truth of them even to the very teeth of the sacred writers.

Such a practice as this shews our great unwillingness to submit our opinions to the dictates of heaven, and argues an unbecoming pride of our own reasoning powers. It draws us into the very spirit as well as the sentiments of Socinus and his followers, who have ventured to affirm, *If it should be written in*

he holy scriptures not once only, but often, that Christ made satisfaction to God for sin, I would not therefore believe the matter as you think. And again, *Even the greatest force is to be used with such words rather than take them in the obvious sense.* Thus speaks Socinus in his treatise of *Satisfaction*, and in his Epistle to Balcerimicius. How evident is it that such men refuse a subjection to the revelation of God himself, nor will they abide by the decisions of scripture, when it doth not speak such things as suit their unhappy relish? And it is a very dangerous thing to enter into this temper and spirit.

Peter and the beloved John, when they treat of their Master's death, assert with frequency and great strength of expression, that doctrine which their Master himself thought proper to give some notice of in his life-time. It is true, he mentions it more sparingly because their prejudices then were not able to bear it; John xvi. 12. *I have yet many things to say unto you, but you cannot bear them now.* But when they were filled with the spirit of wisdom and knowledge, they published and explained their Master's doctrines more at large; they then tell us of *his bearing our sins on his body on the tree*, of his *redeeming us by his precious blood as a lamb without blemish*, of *the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus upon us*, of our *being washed from sin in his blood, and redeemed unto God thereby:* and use the same sort of language which St. Paul, who learned his gospel also by the revelation of Jesus Christ; and who acquaints us that he *gave up his life a ransom for sinful men*, that *his blood was shed for the remission of sins, that he was made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law*, which pronounces death upon every sinner, and that *he hath taken away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and made peace by the blood of his cross between God and man.* But the indulgence of Agrippa's scheme encourages us to contradict Christ and his apostles at once, by taking away the obvious and natural sense of their words, under a pretence of making their doctrine more honourable and more conformable to the nature and reason of things.

When a man has once persuaded his conscience to deny this doctrine of the *propitiation of Christ for sins*, which is so plainly taught in scripture, and in such various forms of speech, what is there of doctrine in the New Testament which they may not deny or turn into an allegory and figure? I should be ready to fear that neither the perverse sentiments of Mr. Woollastan, who turned the miracles of Christ into allegory, nor any other idle and unscriptural scheme of interpretation would be very hard to defend upon such principles, and after such a step as this. If the propitiation of sin by the sufferings of Christ may be thus interpreted away by pretended figures, and explained into the doctrines and duties of mere natural religion, what may not

Jewish tropes and figures be capable of doing? What doctrine is there that they cannot evaporate and destroy? In short, if we accustom ourselves to such interpretations of scripture as Agrippa makes use of, it will gradually lead us into such a gross abuse of words and phrases, that we may bring our consciences and our lips frequently to speak one thing and mean another: And if Christ and his apostles mean no more when they preach the gospel to the Jews or Gentiles in all these sacrificial phrases than what Agrippa pretends, I fear men will be tempted to set up for a defence of loose and large equivocation upon the foot of tropes and figures, and make Christ and his apostles their pattern and their example.

And that I may multiply no more particulars on this awful and displeasing subject, I add, in the last place, that this unhappy doctrine brings even the salvation of our souls into question and danger. I would not dare pronounce *damnable heresy* or destruction where Christ or his apostles have not pronounced it; and yet I would not venture to approach within the sweep of such a sentence. I should be dreadfully afraid of standing under the terror and vengeance of that text; Heb. x. 26, 27. *If we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation which shall devour the adversary.* The case here described seems to be this: The sacred writer had been discoursing in the beginning of this epistle about the dignity of the person of our blessed Lord, and had introduced him in the following chapters into his glorious office of a high-priest: But, in the ninth and tenth chapters, he describes very particularly his becoming *a sacrifice for the sins of men*, and shews how he made atonement for our moral transgressions in the sight of God as the Lord of conscience, even as *the blood of bulls and goats* under the Jewish law made atonement for legal defilements or ceremonial faults before God as king of their nation, or as visible head of their church. This is called, Heb. ix. 13. *Sanctifying the unclean to the purifying of the flesh;* and he then argues, "How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works, or works deserving death, that you may serve the living God."

And to make it further appear that this is not a mere matter of speculation or opinion, he subjoins a further practical use of it in the tenth chapter, when he had finished this doctrine in the eighteenth verse, he shews us in the succeeding verses what use we are to make of it; and that is to *enter into the holiest*, or address the God of heaven with confidence *by the blood of Jesus, and draw near to him in full assurance of faith having our hearts* as it were *sprinkled with his blood* of atonement, and delivered

reby *from an evil* or guilty *conscience*. He proceeds then to ke another inference, viz. that the Jewish converts or He- ws *should hold fast their profession of the christian faith hout wavering, and not forsake the christian assemblies and rship*, verses 24, 25. *For, says he, if we sin wilfully after have received the knowledge of the truth*, if we depart from istianity, and particularly from the great and important doc- nes of it which my pen has just written, that is, "the sacrifice Christ for the obtaining the pardon of our sins," and that er such evident conviction and constraining reason to believe there remains no more sacrifice for sin to those who deny or acuate this sacrifice of Christ." Now "if blood was appoint- to make atonement for the soul." Lev. xvii. 22. "if there is no remission of levitical defilement to be obtained under the wish law without shedding of blood;" if the priest was never enter into the most holy place, nor appear before God there thout the blood of the sacrifice; Lev. xvi. 14, 15. if Christ mself as the high-priest and representative of his people, would not once enter into heaven to appear there in the presence of od for us without his blood: Heb. ix. 12—24. surely they run most dreadful risk of unpardoned guilt and divine indignation o renounce the only effectual sacrifice for sin, even that which e Son of God has offered, and venture into the presence of od without the blood of sprinkling upon them, without faith in e blood of Christ. The very close connection of these dread- l words of threatening, with so long and particular discourse the atonement made by the blood of Christ, seems to point is threatening not merely against those who are apostates om all the christian doctrine, but particularly against those ho forsake and renounce this great truth of the "sacrifice Christ for sin." And let it be observed that the form of e threatening "there remains no more sacrifice," seems to ive a peculiar reference to the denial or renunciation of this octrine.

Some think the words of St. Peter may confirm this of St. 'aul; 2 Pet. ii. 1. where he foretels of "false teachers, who all bring in damnable heresies, in Greek, heresies of destruc- on, denying the Lord that bought them, and bring on them- elves swift destruction." Now as in natural religion, "a de- ial that God made us," is in effect the same thing as a "denial f the God that made us," so in revealed religion to "deny at the Lord Jesus bought us," is it not much the same as to deny the Lord Jesus that bought us?" For it is a renouncing im under that character or office by which he becomes a Savi- ur, and therefore swift destruction follows upon it. But I will ot insist on this, the other is sufficient.

Sect. IV.—*The Necessity of this Doctrine represented in the express Words of two learned Men of well-known Charity, and of a Catholic Spirit.*

But that I may not appear to stand alone in this sentiment, which may seem uncharitable, says Fervestio, I would appeal to the late reverend and learned Doctor John Evans, who in a book he wrote in express vindication of christian charity, entitled, "A Second Letter to Mr. Cumming about Scripture Consequences," page 88, &c. expresses himself in such strong language as I would rehearse at large, that the force of his arguments may appear. I have transcribed it into a little pocket book to carry it always about me in these seasons of error and apostacy, that I might have it ready to shew upon every occasion, how zealous a defender of this doctrine he was, though we know he was a man of some latitude in other points of strict orthodoxy, "There are some scripture passages, says he, which contain propositions that are declared in the passages themselves necessary to be belived in order to salvation, as that "Jesus is the Messiah; John viii. 24. "that he is come in the flesh," 2 John iv. 2—6. This, says he, are the first sort of fundamentals or "necessary articles, because the Holy Ghost in scripture hath expressly made the belief of them terms of salvation." Then he adds secondly, "I think the Spirit of God may have signified the universal necessity of believing some truths, by other ways of express declaration, which are as full and obligatory, as his saying in so many words, "that he that believes them shall be saved, or he that believes them not shall perish." As, when the revelation of a doctrine is very express and plain: When it is set in several lights, or expressed by several phrases, all pointing very forcibly to one and the same common sense: When the Spirit of God lays great stress upon it, either by mentioning it at every turn in the sacred writings, or by interweaving it with the main doctrines and institutions of christianity; or by making the blessings, without which we cannot be saved, to depend upon it, and even upon the belief of it: or by representing it as the foundation of practical godliness. When, I say, I find these marks affixed to any doctrine of revelation in the revelation itself; I mean, all or most of them concurring; I apprehend them to be an express testimony of the Spirit of God, that such a truth is universally necessary, fully equivalent to the former. I shall only instance in one truth, which though it hath, as I have just observed, the former mark also of universal necessity, has these additional marks too, viz. "that Christ died a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins."

I know no truth more plainly expressed, or more frequently inculcated in the scriptures, and this in a variety of phrases of obvious meaning, especially comparing the Old and New Testa-

ent together: "that God laid on him the iniquities of us all; at he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iquities; died for our sins; was delivered for our offences: ore the sins of many; bore our sins in his body on the tree; ade his soul an offering for sin; was made sin and a curse for s; suffered, the just for the unjust; gave himself a ransom for ll; made reconciliation for the sins of the people; is set forth s a propitiation:" besides many other phrases used in the case; ith the plain sense of which I cannot but think any honest mind ay be safely trusted, though he knew none of the hypotheses uilt upon it on the one hand, and notwithstanding all the subtlties of the Socinians to enervate the force of them on the ther. At the same time I find the greatest stress laid upon this octrine in the express declarations of scripture. Divine perfecons are said to be eminently displayed in it: His love; Rom. . 6—9. *God commendeth his love to us, in that while we were et sinners, Christ died for us;*" 1 John iv. 10. "Herein is ove, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his on to be the propitiation for our sin." His wisdom; Eph. i. 7, . "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forveness of sins according to the riches of his grace, wherein he as abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence." His ighteousness; Rom. iii. 25, 26. "Whom God hath set forth o be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his ighteousness for the remission of sins that are past through the orbearance of God: To declare, I say, at this time his righteusness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which elieveth in Jesus." It is the scope of the epistle to the Herews to shew, that the Mosaical sacrifices were intended to preigure it. The great blessings of the covenant are expressly nade to depend upon it, viz. our redemption. 1 Pet. i. 18, 19. "For as much as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with coruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation eceived by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious lood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." The pardon of our sins; Eph. i. 7. "In whom we have redempion through his blood, the forgiveness of sins;" which words re repeated in Col. i. 14. and again, Heb. ix. 14, 26. "How nuch more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciince from dead works to serve the living God," Verse 26.—"Once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin y the sacrifice of himself." Our access to God; Heb. x. 19, 20. "Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the oliest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which he ath consecrated for us." Our eternal redemption; Heb. ix. 2. "Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own lood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained

eternal redemption for us." And the whole covenant of grace; Heb. x. 29. "The blood of the covenant wherewith he was sanctified." Heb. xiii. 20. "The blood of the everlasting covenant." The only two visible rites instituted under the New Testament, baptism and the Lord's-supper, are expressly described, as referring to it, and representations of it. Rom. vi. 3. *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death?* Mat. xxvi. 28. *For this is my blood of the New Testament which is shed for many, for the remission of sins.* It is represented as the great encouragement to christians under their guilty fears; Rom. viii. 34. *Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died.* And it is often inculcated as a principal motive to christian practice; Rom. vi. 3—11. "We are baptized into his death,—that as Christ was raised from the dead,—we also should walk in newness of life: Our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed: Likewise reckon yourselves to be dead unto sin; 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. The love of Christ constraineth us, for we thus judge——that he died for all, that they—should not live to themselves, but to him who died for them; Tit. ii. 14. Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people zealous of good works." It is spoken of as the glory of the christian religion; 1 Cor. i. 23, 24. "But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God." It is that which the founders of it, under Christ, chiefly glorified in; Gal. vi. 14. *But God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.* And it is made the chief subject of their preaching; 1 Cor. ii. 2. *But I determined not to know any thing among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified.* Besides this, our actual justification is expressly annexed to our faith in his blood; Rom. iii. 25. In a word, this doctrine is interwoven in the revelation itself with the whole of the christian religion. These things laid together would oblige me to conclude this doctrine to be most fundamental in christianity; even though it had not the first character annexed to it, viz. an express declaration of scripture that it is necessary to our salvation." Thus much says this learned writer.

And as Doctor Evans, who was well known to be a person of large charity, makes the belief of *the propitiation of Christ* necessary to salvation, at least to those who have the New Testament in their hands to lead them into all christian truth; so the late venerable and learned Doctor Whitby, who was no favourer of the peculiar principles of John Calvin, nor an enemy to extensive charity, makes *faith in the atonement of Christ* as necessary as Doctor Evans does. See his preface to the first

general epistle of St. John, where he cites the words of our Saviour; John vi. 53. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except you eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, you have no life in you:" And then adds, The express words of Christ clearly declare the necessity of faith in his body given, and his blood shed for the remission of sins, to justification and salvation, we "being justified by his blood, and through faith in his blood," as Rom. iii. 25. and chapter v. 9.

He goes on to prove the same point from the plain declarations of St. Paul, who among the many things he preached to the Corinthians, as things by the belief of which they should be saved, mentions three articles. First of all, "that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; secondly, "that he was buried;" and thirdly, "that he rose from the dead;" 1 Cor. xv. 1—4. The doctrine of the sufficiency of faith in Christ's death for "justification without the works of the law," is by the same apostle declared to be so necessary, that he saith of them who gainsayed it, "Christ is become of no effect to you,—ye are fallen from grace;" Gal. v. 2, 4. Thus far Doctor Whitby. Now what would these gentlemen have said to Agrippa, if he had acquainted them with his scheme, if we may judge of their sentiments by these citations? All their charity would not have allowed him a place in a christian church, nor thought him worthy of the privilege of our holy communion.

Ferventio having cited two such authors as these, supposed he had sufficiently secured himself from the censure of an uncharitable spirit: But to defend his sentiments yet further, he proceeds thus: I would fain know, says he, *what is charity*, when the word is used in this sort of debate. Though charity, is said by St. Paul; 1 Cor. xiii. 7. *to believe all things, and to hope all things*, yet can we ever think that charity obliges us to believe that man to be a christian, who renounces one chief office of Christ? Or to hope that Agrippa has all the necessaries of christianity, when it is so evident by his own confession that he wants several of them? Will charity require us to say, that any man will find *propitiation for his sins, through faith in the blood of Christ*, who denies that this blood hath made any real propitiation for sin, and hath no faith in it for that purpose, and who continues to do this after the whole New Testament is put into his hands, and these scriptures which so plainly assert it, are pointed out to him in abundance and variety? Christian charity, my friends, though it ought to be stretched to a large extent, yet it ought not to renounce truth and scripture, nor must it be boundless and unlimitable.

"Est modus in rebus, sunt certi denique fines,
Quos ultra citraq; nequit consistere rectum."—*Hor.*

"There is a mean in things, its bounds are sure:
Nor truth nor goodness can extremes endure."

V. Is it not a possible thing that one good man may be suffered to fall so far into a mistake, as to believe *the atonement of Christ* is but figurative and emblematical, and not real and proper? Is it impossible that a sincere and diligent searcher of the truth, who loves and values his bible, and reads it night and day, with prayer that he may learn the mind and will of his Maker there, should fall into the sentiments of Agrippa concerning the death of Christ? Do you pronounce it an utter impossibility that a man should be convinced of sin, should be humble and penitent before God, should return to his Maker in all the ways of known duty, and yet should mistake the true sense of such scriptures as speak of this atonement? Surely, I think, there are two or three persons of my acquaintance, whose souls are very sincere in their searches of divine truth, in order to practise all the known will of God, and yet they have not hitherto been persuaded to believe *that Christ was a proper propitiation for the sins of men by his death* in your sense: Is all their *repentance*, all their *love to God*, all their *holiness* and sincere desires to please him, all their *trust in Jesus Christ as a Mediator with the Father*, and their *submission* to him as a king, is it all made void by their ignorance of this one doctrine, viz. his atoning *sacrifice* in the scriptural sense of it?

I desire also to put in one word here concerning those who have all these characters of sincere christians, and yet doubt of the effectual and irresistible *influences of the Spirit of God in our day*, turning the hearts of sinners to God, and with an almighty power changing the bent of their souls to holiness. May not the blessed Spirit bestow this favour on any of those who know not this doctrine? Is such an ignorance an eternal bar against his enlightening and converting operations? Can they be enlightened in this truth without his influences? Will he for ever deny these blessings to those honest souls who happen to mistake the extent of his influences, and limit them only to the primitive times? I might repeat almost all the former questions with regard to this doctrine also, and ask if Ferventio would judge and condemn all such persons, and leave them no hope. I wish Ferventio would answer such queries as these: I beg you would take them, Sir, into your further consideration when you are alone and retired. In the mean time I would appeal to Charistes here present, whether there is not a great deal to be said on the negative side of this question, concerning the necessity of believing these doctrines in order to the salvation of men.

And I, says Ferventio, will appeal to Charistes too, though I believe, by what I have heard of him, that his charity is sometimes stretched to a length beyond my reach: But before he pronounces his opinion, I beg leave to make these two or three

remarks on Cavenor's questions. The first is, that he has not so much as attempted to refute my arguments for the necessity of this doctrine, except only in mollifying the sense which I have given of two scriptures: So that almost every thing I have said stands in its full force, though he has been making queries on the contrary side: And, secondly, I beg Charistes to observe that the greatest part of Cavenor's defence may be applied to deists and infidels, as well as to Agrippa, with a little change of the words. And my last remark is this, that Cavenor supposes a man may be truly pious and religious, in the practice of faith, repentance and holiness, who renounces this great and important doctrine of the gospel of which we have been treating; but this is what I cannot well assent to: And besides, I think there is a great deal of difference between the mere ignorance of these doctrines in a person who has no advantages for knowledge, and the renouncing them when they are set in so plain a light as to appear to be the express language and dictates of Christ and his apostles. And now I entreat you, Charistes, and I join with Cavenor to beg this favour of you, that you would tell us your sentiments on this subject.

SECT. VI.—*The Doctrines affirmed, and their Necessity limited and adjusted.*

Charistes was very unwilling to become an umpire in such an awful and difficult debate; yet being much importuned, he did at last prevail upon himself, and began to explain himself in the following manner:

With regard to the arguments used by Paulinus in vindication of these doctrines, I think, when put all together, they carry such weight and force with them, that I do not see how any reasonable person, who reads the New Testament, can well resist them, except he lies under the powerful and prevailing influence of some culpable prejudice. I must acknowledge also the reasonableness of Ferventio's zeal in a matter of so great importance in christianity. As these doctrines are so evidently a part of *that faith which was once delivered to the saints*, I do not wonder to see Ferventio *contend so earnestly for them*. It is proper to have their importance set before the mind in a solemn and awful light; and most of the arguments he has used seem to carry such a degree of evidence in them, as ought to awaken the spirits of those who are searching after divine knowledge, to take heed lest they drop any necessary part of the great salvation. I am of Ferventio's opinion, that our charity must not be boundless: It must have its proper limits according to scripture: Yet, I fear, he has expressed himself with a little too much severity and too little charity in some parts of his discourse on this subject.

And I fear then, said Paulinus, I shall fall under censure upon the same account. Perhaps my zeal for these great and blessed doctrines of the gospel may have given too much sharpness to some of my expressions, while I was pursuing a course of argument: But you will forgive me, Charistes, since you know that I have two sons here in London, in the midst of these errors and dangerous opinions. The young fellows do not want a natural genius, and I thank God, they have something of a serious turn towards religion too; but they love to keep polite company, and if Agrippa's creed grow much in fashion, I fear they will be tainted with it, and lose a great deal of that christianity which I taught them in their younger years. It was that tender concern for the welfare of their souls which dwells always with me, that might help perhaps to give an edge and accent to some of my sentences, and I feel it inclines me sometimes to say a severe word or two against these growing and pernicious notions: And though after all that Cavenor has said in a way of excuse, I am still satisfied of the falsehood and danger of them, yet I am forced to acknowledge that in some of his questions he has suggested several thoughts, which may draw out the heart of a christian to greater degrees of moderation and candour than Ferventio seems to admit of. However, Charistes, I beg you would proceed to fulfil the request of these gentlemen here present, and shew us your opinion upon the subject of their debate.

I take a pleasure, Sir, said Charistes, to obey your orders at all times, and particularly since you have confirmed the request of these gentlemen: And I would therefore humbly propose it to the company, whether this contest between Cavenor and Ferventio about the *necessity of believing the atonement of Christ in order to salvation* may not be compromised by some such considerations as these:

I. There are some things which hold so very important a place in the christian religion, that in their very nature they seem to be essential to christianity as it is a well-connected system of doctrines and practices, formed upon the complete revelation of the New Testament. These have been usually called *fundamentals*, from a supposition that the apostle enumerated them all; Heb. vi. 1. where he speaks of the *foundation of repentance from dead works, and faith towards God*, &c. and which are there called the *principles of the doctrine of Christ*. But I chuse rather to call them *essentials*, to avoid something of those controversies which have been already formed upon the word *fundamentals*, and are attached to it.

Now among other characters which may be given of essentials or fundamentals, I look upon those things to be such essential parts of christianity which being clearly revealed in the

w Testament, many or most of the special privileges of it, l the special duties of it are contained in them or founded on them: For these privileges and these duties are nothing e but the engagements which the gospel represents on God's e, and requires on ours, as it is properly a covenant of grace tween God and man; and surely these engagements of bles-gs and duties are essential to this covenant, as it is a constitu-n in which two parties are mutually engaged, or at least which proposed of God to be accepted of man.

II. Upon this account, the doctrine of the atonement of rist for sin seems to me to be an essential part of christianity, cause so many of the peculiar privileges and chief duties of it so deeply interested therein, and are founded upon it.

As for the duties of repentance, faith and hope, prayer d praise, love and obedience to God and Christ, this doctrine the atoning sacrifice of Christ, is deeply concerned in them . Doth not St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans, chapter vi. ild our hatred to sin, our repentance for it, and our mortifi-ion of it on the doctrine of the foregoing chapters, where he d treated largely on the atoning blood of the Son of God? *ow shall we continue in sin, since Christ died to remove it?* Is t our faith required to be *a faith in the blood of Christ;* Rom. 25? Does not our hope depend on his death and his resurrec-on? Rom. v. 5, 6. and chapter viii. 34. *Are we not directed pray in the name of our great High Priest who made reconci-tion or atonement for sins?* John xvi. 23, 24. Heb. ii. 17. d chapter iv. 14, 16. "Have we not access to God through is Mediator, who has made peace by the blood of his cross?" ph. ii. 13—18. Is he not appointed our *Advocate with the ther, and our propitiation* to encourage us to avoid every sin? John ii. 1, 2. Must we not offer praise to our Lord Jesus hrist as the church in heaven does, because *he has redeemed us th his own blood?* Rev. v. 9, 13. Is not his *dying for us* re-esented as a reason and motive of our love and obedience to m, that is, *living to him?* 2 Cor. v. 15.

Thus much for the duties of the covenant of grace; and as the promises and privileges of it, viz. Pardon of sin, justifi-tion, acceptance with God, answer of prayer, holy peace and y, together with the expectation of heavenly blessedness, are t all these built, according to the writings of the apostles, on e doctrine of the atoning sacrifice of Christ, or his dying for r sins? Rom. v. 1—11. Is not the blood of Christ, which ones for sin? Heb. x. 10. called *the blood of the covenant,* in rse 29? *The blood of the everlasting covenant, whereby God be-mes the God of peace?* Heb. xiii. 20. Is not this the blood of that crifice that has reconciled God and man, and brought them to a covenant of peace and mutual love? And indeed without

blood under the law or gospel *there is no remission of sins*, no peace with God for sinners. If you review all that Paulinus and Ferventio have said on this subject, and what has been cited from the late Doctor Evans, I think there cannot be much room to doubt whether the doctrine of *Christ's atoning sacrifice* be not an essential article in the christian covenant, so that our christianity is a very incomplete thing without it. Let me ask one question here: What would you have thought of a man who pretended to be a Jew in the land of Israel during that dispensation, and yet did neither believe not practise any thing relating to the sacrifices and offerings of atonement which were appointed by Moses, but renounced and neglected them all? Could you imagine this man was a sincere and complete Jew? Or could he be a hearty believer and practiser of the religion of Moses? How then can a man be called a complete christian, who renounces the only sacrifice of atonement which belongs to the christian religion, and which is the only medium of our forgiveness of sins? The man who denies and renounces this essential doctrine, though in common language he has the name of christian given him, the name being determined by the major part of his opinions, yet if names were to be applied by the rules of strict proportion and justice, I do not see how his character could arise higher than that of *almost a christian*.

As these words were pronounced, Ferventio rose up, for he was grown big with an inference which he could not suppress.—Upon this foot, says he, Agrippa can scarce be half a christian, for his creed has dropped so many of these essentials of christianity, that I fear he is almost a christian. But pray, Charistes, go on to your third consideration. I obey, Sir, said Charistes, and pursued his discourse:—

III. All the essentials of christianity can hardly be supposed necessary to be believed or acknowledged in order to the salvation of every man; for Ferventio himself has confessed that his own charity might extend so far as to include a heathen within the reach of salvation, who should be religious and penitent, desirous to know and do the will of God, and to trust in his mercy so far as the light of nature can trace out his mercy and his will, provided that he never had opportunity or means to know Christ and his gospel, and consequently neither knows nor believes, any one of the peculiar essentials* of christianity. It is hard to make incurable ignorance a ground of utter condemnation. And therefore it is certain, that when our Saviour commands his gos-

* Essentials of christianity are either common or peculiar. Common are those which it borrows from natural religion, such as the being of God, the necessity of holiness, repentance for sin, and hoping for mercy. The peculiar essentials of it are the atonement of Christ, *his intercession, faith in him*, praying in *his name*, baptism, the Lord's-supper, &c.

pel *to be preached to all*, and pronounces *damnation on him that believes it not*, there must be sufficient light and evidence supposed: And none can incur this sentence but such as by some fault of the will, either neglect, avoid, or resist this evidence.

IV. If this be admitted, will it not follow then, that there is no one of all the peculiar essentials of christianity which are absolutely and certainly necessary to salvation, where there has not been sufficient means of light and evidence for the knowledge of them? And consequently the necessary requisites to the salvation of particular persons in christianity itself, as well as in all the rest of the dispensations of God towards fallen man, must be as various as are the cases and circumstances of every particular person, with regard to their different opportunities and advantages for light and knowledge.

And upon this foot of reasoning, not only in different nations and in different ages, the things that are necessary to the salvation of particular persons must be very different, according to the different revelations and advantages under which they lived, but even in the same nation and the same age, some of those articles of christianity may be necessary to the salvation of those persons who live in religious families, and in towns where the gospel is preached in its fulness and glory, which articles are not necessary to the salvation of those who live in obscure villages, among rocks and woods, in little cottages and dark corners of the country, where there is no preaching, and where very few people are possessed of bibles, or are able to read them.—Some points of faith and practice may be necessary for those, who are educated in the constant profession of them, amongst the brightest evidences of reason and scripture to support them, which may not be necessary to those who are bred up from their infancy amidst the contrary errors, and are surrounded and clouded with a thousand unavoidable prejudices against them. It is only a neglect or resistance of light that renders error so very criminal a thing.

V. Thence it will follow, that however christian churches must form the best judgment they can for themselves, how many of these essentials of christianity are necessary to be professed in order to church-fellowship, which affair must be transacted by the general rules of scripture and men's outward profession, yet it is God alone, who is the supreme and final Judge of men's eternal states, that can determine how much of these essentials in faith or practice is necessary to the salvation of each particular person: He alone knows the precise measure of light and evidence which is sufficient to convince every man of the truth, and it is he who has authority to say, *The soul that believes it not shall be damned.* I say, it is he alone has sufficient penetration and cognizance of the situation and circumstances, and the workings

of the hearts of every person, to apply his own rules always without mistake. In his divine balance he exactly ponders the weight of every unavoidable prejudice, and every difficulty from within and without, under which a person labours in his enquiries after truth. He can make just allowances for them all when he decides their state. He surveys also all the exercises of humble dependence on his grace, all the fervent prayers which have been offered up by such a soul for divine light and conduct; and all these shall be put into the balance in order to judgment: The Lord, *the Judge of the whole earth will do right*; (Gen. xviii. 25. It is his own work, and he transfers it not to us.

VI. Yet still we may venture to assert, that where there are great and constant advantages for light and for acquaintance with the whole christian religion, it is a matter of the utmost hazard to renounce so important and so essential an article of christianity as this of the *atoning sacrifice of Christ*. A man had need be well assured of his sincerity in searching after truth, and that he has indulged no criminal prejudice, no secret bias of passion, no warpings of heart by humour or interest, no vain elations of the pride of reason and self-sufficiency; he had need be very conscious also that he has earnestly sought light and instruction of God, together with his own honest enquiries, and that he has never wilfully neglected or avoided any evidence: I say, a man had need be well assured of all this, who reads this doctrine daily in his New Testament so plainly expressed and so often repeated there, and yet denies this truth, abandons this refuge of a guilty creature, and renounces this divine hope. A man had need have very bright evidences of the steady uprightness of his soul in reading the scripture, and seeking the way of salvation there, without pride or partiality, who confesses himself a sinful creature, and yet, with the New Testament in his hands, refuses to receive this blessed provision of grace which is there offered, and dares venture into the presence of a holy and sin-avenging God without a propitiation, without a sacrifice.

I desire it may be observed here, that several things which I have asserted concerning the *propitiation of the blood of Christ might be also applied to the sanctifying operations of the Holy Ghost*, but perhaps not in the same degree; for though I believe these operations to be an essential part of christianity, yet they may not be quite so powerfully pronounced in scripture, or not so largely argued, or not so frequently repeated, as the atonement of Christ is, and therefore, perhaps, the necessity of acknowledging that doctrine may not be quite so great. I am verily persuaded, and I think there is reason for it in scripture, that no man shall be saved who is not made partaker of both these blessings; nor do I pretend to say which is most necessary to the salvation of men in the great scheme and counsels of God.

If a heathen that knows not Christ be ever accepted of God and forgiven, *it is through the atonement which Christ has made.* If ever he be renewed to repentance and holiness, *it is through the influence of the blessed Spirit.* And though some who call themselves christians may not receive nor profess these truths, yet if ever they are saved it must be by the participation of these blessings, whether they will believe and acknowledge it or no; and they are infinitely more indebted to Christ their Redeemer, and the Spirit their Sanctifier, than Christ and the Spirit are to them. Whosoever is elect or chosen to salvation, *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, it is through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ;* 1 Pet. i. 2. And may God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, have all due acknowledgments and honours.

I will allow to Cavenor that there may be many of the divine mediums whereby our salvation was either contrived, procured, or applied, which may not be clearly revealed unto us, and therefore are not necessary to be acknowledged by us: But those mediums, viz, the *sacrifice of Christ,* and the *operations of the Holy Spirit,* which are so carefully and so plainly revealed to us in scripture, that our personal transactions with the great God may be managed through the merit of the one, and the influence of the other, these are necessary to be acknowledged and received, wheresoever this revelation comes with sufficient light and evidence. What are the chief reasons, why the names of the Son of God and his blessed Spirit are revealed from heaven to be of standing use, in the religion of mankind, through all the ages of christianity, if it be not that one may be acknowledged as the Redeemer of his people, and the other as the Sanctifier; and that there may be a continual dependence on the merit of the one, and the influences of the other, in all our transactions with God? *It is through Jesus, who is our peace-maker by his blood, that we both Jews and Gentiles have our access by one Spirit unto the Father;* Eph. ii. 18. *The blood of the sacrifice has paved out a new and a living way to God,* and the powerful influences of the Spirit conduct us in that way. Dreadful hazard of missing God, if we renounce the way, when it is so plainly shewn us, and refuse this divine conducter who offers his assistance!

I must confess for my own part, I would not for a world venture my soul upon the mere mercy of God without any regard to the atonement of Christ, nor trust to be renewed by the powers of nature without seeking the operations of the Spirit of grace, since they are revealed in scripture with so much evidence: Yet neither to gain a world would I dare set up for a judge, and pronounce hell and damnation upon any such humble and sincere soul, as Cavenor saith he is acquainted with; such a soul who

repents of sin, who loves God heartily, and receives the gospel of Christ as his only hope; and, at the same time, with humble prayer and diligence seeks after all divine truth, though he has not yet been able to receive these doctrines, in the scriptural sense of them, and is afraid to believe them for want of fuller conviction. Wheresoever such a person is found, I am well persuaded, the blessed God, who is himself the Author of all this good work in his heart, will not suffer him to perish for want of knowledge. *Our great High-Priest can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way;* Heb. v. 2. If the belief of his atonement be necessary to their salvation, he will find ways to illuminate the mind and convince the conscience, and will rather send an angel or an apostle to them, as he did to Cornelius, than that any sincere penitent should fall under a condemning sentence.

SECT. VII.—*The transcendent Advantages of the Doctrine of the atonement of Christ, and the Sanctification of the Spirit toward all Christian Duties.*

When Charistes had finished his discourse, Cavenor acknowledged how much he was pleased and profited by the greatest part of it: And I think, said he, I shall become a convert of Paulinus and you, if you can clear up one point of difficulty that sticks with me still; and that is, that you suppose the christian duties of repentance, faith, and love, prayer, and hope, with universal obedience, to be built on this particular doctrine of the atonement for sin by the blood of Christ. I confess the scriptures you have brought seem to give some countenance to it; but does not Agrippa's creed secure the necessity of all the same duties? Suppose that Christ died, only as a martyr for the doctrine of pardon and peace and eternal life, to be obtained by repentance and new obedience; or suppose yet further, that he was put to death also to shew, in a way of emblem, that sin deserved death; are not christians under the same obligations to believe the doctrine of Christ, and to fulfil these duties, as though *he died a sacrifice to make atonement for sin?* This is certain, that the blessed God would never send his own Son to our earth, nor would his Son ever come down from heaven, merely to bring messages of notion and speculation to mankind, if they have not a peculiar and considerable influence upon the practice of piety and virtue. Tell me therefore plainly, Charistes, what advantages has the doctrine of the atonement of Christ and the sanctifying operations of the Spirit to promote practical godliness, so much beyond Agrippa's creed.

This task, replied Charistes, I readily and chearfully accept, and will endeavour to make it appear in several instances, what a superior influence on true piety and goodness our doctrines have above all that Agrippa's creed can pretend to.

And first, let us begin with the *atonement of Christ*. The peculiar advantages that it has to promote all christian duties are such as these:

I. It gives us *a more awful and dreadful sense of sin, and awakens us by a more solemn motive to sincere and hearty repentance:* For hereby it appears that sin is so highly offensive to the blessed God, that he could not think fit to forgive it in his creatures, even where he designed to shew mercy to them, without requiring some compensations for the honours of his broken law; and that by such a glorious sacrifice as his own Son. Does not sin appear more hateful when God thought it requisite that such a divine person, who is *One with the Father*, should pay down his life and blood, and yield to so many agonies of soul, if he would undertake to expiate the guilt of it? What is there in all the pretences of the death of Christ as a witness to the truth of his gospel, or as a mere representation of what our sins deserved; what is there, I say, in all this, comparable to the grand and awful idea, that the Son of God must be made a sacrifice before the evil of sin could be removed, even by a God of mercy and forgiveness? This more powerfully excites us to hate all sin, and that with greater detestation; to seek the mortification of it with a warmer zeal, to mourn more sensibly for our past transgressions, and to walk with greater watchfulness for time to come, lest we again defile our souls with such abominations which the soul of God hates with so intense and irreconcileable a hatred.

II. *This doctrine of the atonement of Christ for our sins, raises in us much more grand and sublime ideas both of the justice and of the mercy of God, than if sin were pardoned, without an atonement, and teaches us to contemplate those perfections of the divine nature with double veneration and acknowledgment.* By this means our religious fear of God will be greatly increased, and our love to him be inflamed to a much higher degree, as indeed the benefit of our forgiveness, when it is set in this light, requires. Sinners will be more effectually deterred from venturing to affront that justice which will not suffer mercy itself to pardon sin without a satisfaction to the rights of government. Such justice will be more revered which would not spare the Son of God himself when he had undertaken to become a sponsor for guilty creatures: And mercy will be adored with so much greater gratitude, since God himself, the person offended, hath in his rich mercy found out and provided such a full satisfaction for his justice. I do but hint these things, Cavenor, in brief language to your judgment in this conversation, which if mentioned by a preacher, would furnish out abundant matter for amplification and oratory.

III. *The condescension, the compassion and love of our bles-*

sed Saviour is represented in a much more glorious light by this doctrine of his suffering as a sacrifice in the room and stead of guilty creatures, and it should engage our returns in love in a much higher proportion. Pray, Cavenor, think with yourself, should a person come down from heaven to preach to you forgiveness of sins upon repentance, and in order to assure you of the truth and authority of his commission, should he expose himself to death to bear witness to his message, or should he suffer himself to be put to death to shew you in emblem what your sins required; would this represent his love and compassion to you in half so high a degree, as if you who are the offender were demanded by God himself to terrible and eternal execution, unless you could find a surety to suffer for you, and the blessed Jesus stepped forth and freely became your surety, and had the agonies and the anguish of death executed upon him in your stead; and suppose thereupon you were not only released from bonds, but had also a title to eternal life given you on the account of what he had done and suffered? Methinks the love manifested in the one case above the other is superior to all comparison, and demands a more abundant measure of our gratitude and affection.

As for the mere proof of his commission to publish pardon to penitents, the *miracles of Christ* effected this much more than his death could do: Nay his death could never have done it without his maracles. All that his voluntary death could pretend to, was to witness his own sincerity in bringing this message, but it could never of itself prove this message to be divine. And as for the demonstration of what our sins deserved, this was perhaps more effectually manifested to the world in emblem by bleeding lambs and bullocks every day, month, and year, than by the single death of Christ once in six thousand years. But neither miracles, nor bullocks, nor lambs, nor wonders wrought, nor bleeding beasts sacrificed, could ever express such amazing pity and love as the Son of God expressed by dying as our *surety*, agonizing in the midst of torments which you should have suffered, and expiring in your stead. Would not this excite and kindle your love to a dying Saviour in a much superior degree to all the representations and pretences of Agrippa's creed: And would you not think all your zeal and your future diligence in obedience infinitely his due, who had done and suffered so much for you? These thoughts were doubtless warm and powerful in the heart of the blessed apostle, when he *is crucified and grows dead to every thing by the cross of Christ*, when he lives only to the service of Christ, *who loved me, saith he, and gave himself for me.*

IV. *Our faith and hope in the pardoning grace of God is greatly encouraged, and confirmed, and exalted to much higher degrees by the appearance of Christ's dying as a surety and substitute* in our room and stead, than ever *it could be by the*

mere supposition of his death as an attestation to the truth of his doctrine, or as a mere emblem of what our sins deserved. Let me represent the matter to you, Cavenor, in this manner: Suppose a whole province under the dominion of some great king should have rebelled against him, and as he has shewn himself upon all occasions a prince of strict justice, so he has made it appear that he has equal sentiments of compassion and mercy: Suppose this offended sovereign should send his only Son with a message of forgiveness to all that would lay down their arms and return to their allegiance, and should appoint him to yield up his life to discover how sincere he was in the delivery of his Father's message: Or suppose he should be required to die in their sight, in order to represent to them to them that each one of all those millions of rebels had deserved death; I grant there would be some encouragement for these traitors to repent and return to their duty, and trust in the mercy of their king: Though by the way, this king would seem to be not over-wise, if he were so lavish of the life and blood of his own Son, as to appoint a person of his dignity to die for two such purposes, as a much meaner and more ignoble life might attain.

But now on the other hand, suppose he should send them a much kinder message by his Son, viz. that though they had been guilty of such rebellion, yet he was very unwilling so large a province of his dominion should perish, and yet his laws and his government demanded their lives, unless some surety or substitute could be found who had dignity enough to equal the value of all the guilty number, and at the same time had compassion enough to stand in their stead, and to become a sacrifice for them: Suppose then that the King's Son himself by the Father's appointment should *give up himself as a surety and sacrifice to die in their room*, and to redeem their lives with his own, with assurance that every repenting criminal should enjoy the benefit of this redemption. As this would be a much more abundant evidence of the justice and mercy of the king, would it not also encourage the faith and hope of the poor guilty creatures in his forgiveness to a much superior degree, when they saw the royal sacrifice as their surety bleeding before them? Such is the goodness of the Son of God; such is the mercy of the Father; and now the sinners amongst mankind who repent and trust in this mercy, may be more abundantly assured of forgiveness, for they can say, *God is not only faithful to his word, but just to his Son in forgiving penitent offenders; he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, for the blood of Jesus Christ his Son redeemeth and cleanseth us from all unrighteousness;* 1 John i. 7, 9. He will never exact the dreadful punishment of the principal offenders since he has received so honourable a satisfaction from the surety. Here is justice itself as well as mercy engaged on the side of forgiveness,

which gives a bolder assurance to our faith and hope of pardon and salvation.

V. I might add that *our holy freedom or confidence in prayer is raised higher, and all our addresses to the throne of grace in and by Jesus as a Mediator and Intercessor, are much more animated, encouraged, and supported by the sacrifice of the Son of God* than by any of the doctrines of Agrippa's creed: And therefore the sacred writer to the Hebrews expresses himself thus, chapter x. verse 19. *We have boldness or confidence, brethren, to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus*; and verse 22. *Let us draw near in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled*, that is, with this blood, from an evil or guilty conscience. But Ferventio has paraphrased on this text already, and therefore I am brief. Besides, our prayers gain further encouragement hereby, for we know now that the risen and ascended Saviour pleads for nothing on our account but what he himself has purchased with his own blood: And we venture to ask the biggest and the best of his blessings in his name, because he pleads for them all as the fruit of his own purchase, for he has paid the price of his life for them, when *he died to redeem us from every curse*. Thus much in respect of the several christian duties that relate to God and his Son Jesus.

VI. In the last place let us consider what influence the death of Christ as a sacrifice in our stead may have upon our love, and all our consequent duties to our fellow-creatures, above and beyond what the death of Christ could have in any other view. Here we shall be plentifully convinced if we do but take one single scripture and try to explain it both ways; that is 1 John iii. 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.* Agrippa would explain it thus: Jesus the Son of God bore testimony to his gospel with his own blood, or he suffered death to shew us by way of emblem what our sins required, and therefore we ought to lay down our lives for one another. Surely the inference here does not seem so strong, nor the connection so plain as to reach the conscience of every christian with evidence and power. But if Paulinus were to explain it, I dare venture even in his presence to say that he would make the force of St. John's reasoning appear much more evident and constraining thus: Jesus Christ the Son of God, whom this evangelist more than once represents as God himself, took human flesh and blood upon him, that he might be capable of dying as a ransom for his brethren, the sons of men; and he actually laid down his life as a surety to save them from dying: Surely then we who are the followers of Christ should be ready to lay down our lives for our brethren, when providence calls us to it. I need not ask you, Cavenor, which of these doctrines carries the plainest and

trongest inference and motive with it for our love to our fellow-christians, even in the most glorious and self-denying instances of it?

Thus far have I been shewing some of the advantages which the death of Christ, considered as an atonement for sin, has to engage us in all christian duties, above the view of his death in any other consideration. Let me now speak a word or two to shew how sweet and powerful an influence the doctrine of our regeneration and sanctification by the Spirit of God has to encourage us to repentance and holiness, and to make us truly penitent and holy, above those views and purposes of the mere extraordinary operations of the Spirit which Agrippa represents.

Agrippa tells us that *by the miraculous gifts of the Spirit of God, the divine promise of pardon upon our repentence is confirmed and established*: And I grant, Cavenor, that this has, or should have, a very proper moral influence on men to repent, and it is a spring of powerful persuasion to sinners to return to God. But when a poor convinced awakened sinner finds his nature strongly inclined to evil, and the thoughts of his heart running after vanity and folly; when he experiences in himself a natural aversion to what is holy and divine, as well as weakness to what is good; when he feels how feeble are all his best vows and resolutions, though repeated a hundred times over; when he finds himself surrounded with a thousand temptations in this world on all sides, to allure his heart away from God, and to discourage him in his pursuit of piety and virtue, he is ready to sink under the mighty discouragements, and to give up all for lost; for he finds himself by no means able to subdue his own corruptions, nor to vanquish the temptations which on every side attack him. Here it is he wants a mighty helper. And if he can read among the blessings of the gospel the promised aids and influences of the blessed Spirit to be given to them who ask it, in order to mortify his sins, to strengthen him for every duty, to change his evil nature, and *renew the image of God* in him, and enable him to vanquish his huge temptations; this puts new life and courge into his heart, and awakens and invigorates all the springs of activity within him. He works out his own salvation with all holy diligence because God has promised his Spirit *to work in him both to will and to do*; Luke xi. 13. Rom. viii. 11—14. Phil. ii. 12. 13.

And what think you now, Cavenor? Are not these advantages toward all the duties of the christian life which are derived from the doctrine of Paulinus vastly transcendent to all the principles of Agrippa's creed?

Here Cavenor seemed to stand musing in a sort of astonished silence, and at last with tears in his eyes broke out into a passionate address to heaven. "Forgive me, O my God, that ever I consented to forsake those holy doctrines which I was taught in

my younger years. Blessed Jesus, forgive me that ever I should be so easily led astray from thy word, and part with the blessings of thy atoning sacrifice, and thy sanctifying Spirit. I lie at thy foot a humble penitent, and willing convert to thy divine truths, which these my dear friends have been sent this day by providence to set before me in so powerful and convincing a light: And may I never dare to make the least departure from them again, though under the strongest temptations, but live and die under their blessed influence."

SECT. VIII.—*A Question about a Minister's preaching Agrippa's Doctrine resolved, with hearty Petitions for Agrippa and all his Followers.*

This last scene had something in it so tender and pious, so powerful and affecting, that the whole company felt a sacred and uncommon pleasure. Paulinus and Ferventio abundantly expressed the joy of their hearts, nor was Charistes wanting in thankfulness to God on this occasion. Cavenor, when the devout rapture a little subsided, turned himself to Paulinus and Charistes, and in a most moving manner expressed the everlasting obligations he lay under to their discourses. You have recovered me, said he, by the grace of God, from the dangerous snare in which I was held captive, and reduced me to the faith of the gospel. Pray, Paulinus, permit me to copy out your queries, that I may convey them to Agrippa. Who knows what happy influence they may have towards his recovery too, if the blessed Spirit of God concur with my design? I thank you also, good Ferventio, for that share you have had in my conversion; for though I could not but suspect some want of charity in your discourse, and perhaps I replied a little too roughly, yet your words had so much spirit in them, and carried with them such smart flashes of light, as made their way to my conscience, helped to awaken my stupor, roused me out of my indolence and mistake, and made me more susceptive of better instructions.

I am glad, said Ferventio, if any thing I have said hath been blessed by the providence of God to any useful purpose; and I hope I have not lost my share of profit by all this conversation. Yet I beg leave before the company parts, to ask Charistes one question relating to the foregoing part of his discourse. He has informed us of his charitable sentiments towards persons who are called christians, and yet do not believe those two great and blessed doctrines of christianity: I cannot deny, Sir, but there are some appearances of reason in what you have spoken, and perhaps it is not proper to pronounce an universal sentence of condemnation upon these men. I grant some of my expressions may have been too positive, warm, and severe, and I shall think more of your manner of reasoning, in order to enlarge my charity towards persons under great errors. But

what would you say, Sir, to one who pretends to be a minister of the gospel, who denies these doctrines, and preaches to the people Agrippa's creed? For my part, I declare my opinion freely, I cannot believe him to be a minister of Christ or his gospel, and I should think it my duty to discourage his preaching to the utmost, and persuade all my friends to avoid him as they would avoid poison, or the pestilence. I think it is preaching *another gospel*, as St. Paul calls it; Gal. i. 6—9. or such a perversion of the gospel of Christ, that *if any man* whatsoever, *or an angel from heaven shall preach it*, I believe the great apostle would say, *Let him be accursed.*

Truly, Sir, replied Charistes, though I have learned to attend with reverence and profit upon the labours of ministers who have had very different sentiments upon many points in christianity, yet I think I should never encourage men to set up for ministers of the gospel, who renounce two of the chief doctrines for which a gospel ministry seems to be instituted, who abandon two of the chief mediums by which sinners are invited and encouraged to repent and return to God, and who leave out of their preaching the two chief blessings for which Christ and the Spirit were revealed to the world. I could never think it my duty to give them any countenance in their work: I could never say, *God speed, lest I should be partaker of their evil deeds;* 2 John 10, 11. Yet since I am not an apostle, I would not pronounce a curse upon them, but I would pray for them with sincere and hearty addresses to the mercy-seat, that they might be taught better themselves before they proceeded to teach others, lest if *the blind lead the blind* through a false way, in the midst of day-light and sun-beams and many warnings, *they should both fall into the pit* and perish in their chosen darkness.

May the God of light and truth open the eyes of all such as go astray, guide them into the paths of grace and peace, and incline them to submit their souls to his conduct in the way of happiness! May they be so wise as to take heed, that they resist not any degrees of scriptural light breaking in upon their minds in their searches after knowledge, lest they provoke God to abandon them to their own darkness for ever. *He is a jealous God*, tender of the honours and offices of his Son, and of the dignity of his blessed Spirit in his divine operations. Far be it from me in the midst of my charitable language, to speak any thing that should encourage the dangerous opinions of Agrippa and his disciples: But I heartily lift up these petitions of them, that the good Spirit of God would show them their mistakes, and *recover them from every snare of the devil.* May he release their souls from every criminal prejudice, and guard their enquiries from every dangerous error, that being converted to the faith of Jesus, as our great *sacrifice of atonement*, and seeking

and enjoying the sanctifying influences of *the Holy Spirit*, they may become honourable professors of the gospel in the peculiar glories of it, and being thus trained up for heaven, may at last be possessed of complete salvation.

These pious wishes of Charistes were pronounced with such an air of devotion and goodness, that all the gentlemen present added their hearty *amen* to them. Ferventio was so much pleased with all his discourse and his agreeable manner, that since he found Charistes amidst all his charity maintained a zeal for the truths of the gospel, he took a good liking to the man, and entreated further acquaintance with him. Here the conversation ended, and the company broke up with mutual civilities.

AN HUMBLE ATTEMPT

TOWARDS THE

REVIVAL OF PRACTICAL RELIGION AMONG CHRISTIANS,

BY A SERIOUS ADDRESS

TO

MINISTERS AND PEOPLE.

PREFACE

An Humble Attempt towards the Revival of practical Religion among Christians,"

)NG the papers published last year, there hath been some enquiry whether there be any decay of the dissenting interest and what may osed to have been the occasion of it. So far as I have searched into tter, I have been informed, that whatsoever decrease may have ap- in some places, there have been sensible advances in others. And entering into any debate about the particular reasons of its declension own whatsoever*, I am well satisfied that the great and general rea- e decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men, and the little which the ministrations of the gospel have had of late for the conver- sinners to holiness, and the recovery of them, from the state of cor- ture and "the course of this world, to the life of God by Jesus ' If this be not our hope and design, the support of the dissenting is but of little importance. What is it that we mean by asserting the nd freedom of conscience in our separation from the established , but more effectually to promote the kingdom of God amongst men, ore honour to the name of Christ our Saviour in his institutions, and carry on the blessed work of the salvation of souls?

t if these things are not happily promoted amongst us, it is no won- t persons release themselves from all the inconveniences that in some nay attend their separation from a public establishment, especially is so evident that the allurements of riches and honours, and public nd offices lie all on that side.

t is the complaint of the declension of virtue and piety made only by testant dissenters: It is a general matter of mournful observation all that lay the cause of God to heart: And therefore it cannot be t amiss for every one to use all just and proper efforts for the reco- f dying religion in the world. And since something may be done t the ministers, and something among the people, to attain this desi- d, I have been persuaded to publish these following exhortations or es which are directed both to the one and the other.

e exhortation to ministers was composed at the request of my worthy nd brother Mr. John Oakes, and designed to have been delivered at lic ordination in the congregation of dissenting protestants, at Ches- n Hertfordshire, on November 12, 1729. But the providence of God ted me from fulfilling that service by confining me to a bed of sickness day. In the composition of that discourse my thoughts ran out to four times the length of what would have been sufficient for that service, so nust have greatly contracted it in the delivery: But being much im- ed both by my reverend brother, who has perused far the greatest part nd by the congregation now under his care, to make it public, I have it with a larger view, and humbly hope that my younger brethren in

This whole affair is set in the best light in a little pamphlet entitled, *Thoughts on the most probable Means of reviving the Dissenting Interest, ed by a late Enquiry into the Causes of its Decay."*

B. It was written by the late Rev. Dr. Philip Doddridge.

the ministry may be in some measure excited and encouraged hereby to do their part toward the revival of decaying piety. It is expressly with this view and design, that my worthy friend Mr. David Some, in Leicestershire, published an excellent sermon last year, the perusal whereof I would heartily recommend to all my brethren.

The following exhortation to the people was delivered in several discourses to the congregation which *I serve in the gospel;* and I would hope it has made some serious impressions on the minds of those who heard it, since it had been much desired that they might have a review of it by the assistance of the press. Among the many motives which may be urged upon the consciences of our hearers, in order to awaken them to *strengthen the things that remain and are ready to die*, I thought it not improper to borrow some arguments for this purpose from their own profession as protestant dissenters, and as separating from the established worship of the nation: And this I have done without entering into a detail of all the grounds of our practice, or vindicating the cause of non-conformity, which has been sufficiently performed by other writers. While we quit all the outward advantages of the national establishment by worshipping in separate assemblies, it is presumed in the nature of things, that we do it, or at least that we should do it, upon the prospect of some better advantages for religion; and we hereby also lay ourselves under special obligations to make the best improvement of those real or supposed advantages.

But this particular motive relating to the dissenters is pursued only in the middle part of that discourse. The first and latter sections of it are of equal concern and importance to protestants of every name and party: The sense and style are suited to common understandings: Novelties and elegancies are less needful, where the writer's whole aim is to charge and impress the conscience with the plain rules and duties of practical religion. And, may the Spirit of God, by his heavenly influences, render what was designed sincerely for the revival of real godliness amongst us all, effectual to attain this blessed end!

There is no party of christians whatsoever, who have liberty to chuse their own way of worship, but pretend they are blessed with some special advantages for the service of God, and their increase in piety or virtue beyond their neighbours, and these pretended advantages lay them under proportionable obligations of duty. A great part of this address which I have made to our people tends to enforce every sort of engagement upon their consciences, and to excite them to superior degrees of holiness; and it is the sincere desire of my soul, that our brethren of the church of England also may improve to the utmost all their public privileges of every kind for the increase of virtue and religion. May every denomination of christians in the land maintain a holy emulation with each other, which of us shall run swiftest in the course of the christian life, and make the most eminent advances toward the heavenly world! AMEN.

APRIL 2, 1731.

AN HUMBLE ATTEMPT

TOWARDS THE

'IVAL OF PRACTICAL RELIGION AMONG CHRISTIANS,

By a serious Address to Ministers and People.

An Exhortation to Ministers.

HEN true religion falls under a general and remarkable y, it is time for all that are concerned, to awaken and rouse ıselves to fresh vigour and activity, in their several posts of ice. If the interests of piety and virtue are things fit to be uraged and maintained in the world, if *the kingdom of the ed God* among men be worthy to be supported ; surely it is a ssary and becoming zeal for every one who hath the honour a minister of this kingdom, to take alarm at the appearance ıch danger; and each of us should enquire, What can I o *strengthen the things which remain and are ready to die,* as as to recover what is lost? Let my brethren therefore in ministry forgive me, if I presume at this season to set before ı a plain and serious exhortation. It was prepared for a ic solemnity, wherein an esteemed young friend and brother red into the ministerial office; and upon this account I have l much more freedom in the language than I could ever pre- to justify on any other occasion. It was in the name of my rend brethren then present, as well as in my own, that the ortation addresses him in the manner following:

You have this day devoted and dedicated yourself to the ice of Christ in the ministry of the gospel, and particularly he edification of this church. Your brethren in the ministry e also done all that they can do toward the dedicating and oting you to the same sacred service, by the various solemn sactions of the day; and now we entreat, we exhort, we ge you *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,* and in the ds of the great apostle, that you *take heed to the ministry h you have received in the Lord, that you fulfil it;* Col. iv.

While we are endeavouring to press this charge on your cience, we would speak also, each of us, to our own souls, renew the awful charge upon ourselves. We would call to d our own vows and engagements this day, and revive our ıying and dying zeal in this sacred and important service.

What I have to say on this subject shall be contained under four general heards:

I. Take heed to your own personal religion, as absolutely necessary to the right discharge of the ministerial office.—II. Take heed to your private studies and preparations for public service.—III. Take heed to your public labours, and actual ministrations in the church.—IV. Take heed to your conversation in the world, and especially among the *flock of Christ over which* you preside. Bear with me while I enlarge a little upon each of these.

Sect. I.—*Of a Minister's personal Religion.*

I. Take heed to your own personal religion, especially to the work of God in your own heart, as absolutely necessary to the right discharge of the ministerial work. Surely there is the highest obligation on a preacher of the gospel to believe and practise what he preaches. He is under the most powerful and sacred engagements to be a christian himself, who goes forth to persuade the world to become christians. A minister of Christ who is not a hearty believer in Christ, and a sincere follower of him, is a most shameful and inconsistent character, and forbids in practice what he recommends in words and sentences. But it is not enough for a minister to have a common degree of piety and virtue, equal to the rest of christians; he should transcend and surpass others. The leaders and officers of the army under the blessed Jesus should be more expert in the christian exercises, and more advanced in the holy warfare, than his fellow-soldiers are supposed to be; 2 Cor. vi. 4. *In all things approving ourselves* (saith the apostle) *as the ministers of God in much patience, &c.* and I may add, in much of every christian grace. A little and low degree of it is not sufficient for a minister; see therefore not only that you practise every part and instance of piety and virtue which you preach to others, but abound therein, and be eminent beyond and above the rest, as your station in the church is more exalted, and as your character demands.

The world expects more from you, your own conscience requires more of you, and Christ your Lord both requires and expects much more religion to be found in you, who are the leader, than in the rest of the flock, since your advantages are much superior to most of theirs. Your time and life are in a special manner devoted to the things of God and religion, and the heavenly world: Your particular calling as a minister is much nearer a-kin to your general calling as a christian, than that of the rest of mankind; and you ought to improve it for the advancement of your christianity. You are more disengaged from the busy cares and embarrassments of this life, than other

christians, that you may have your heart and soul more entirely employed in things that relate to the life to come.

Your daily duty calls you to be more conversant with the word of God, with the rules of piety and the gospel of salvation: the precepts which require universal godliness, and the promises that encourage it, are better known to you, and your mind is better furnished with them, or at least it should be so. You are obliged to copy out the life of Christ more exactly, that you may be *an example to the flock* in every thing that is holy. Your temptations to a vain and worldly spirit, and a sensual temper of mind are much fewer than those of many other men, whose hearts and hands are necessarily busied in the affairs of the world, and who are more frequently constrained into the company of sinners.

Now since your helps in the way to heaven, both as to the knowledge and practice of duty, are much greater than what others enjoy, and your obstacles and impediments are in some instances less than theirs, it will be a shameful thing in you, as it is a matter of shame to any of us, to sink below the character of other christians in the practice of our holy religion, or even if we do not excel the most of them, since our obligations to it, as well as our advantages for it, are so much greater than others. Take heed therefore to your own practical and vital religion, as to the truth, reality, and evidence of it, as to the liveliness and power of it, as to the growth and increase of it.

I. Take heed to your own practical religion, to the truth and reality of it, and the clear and undoubted evidence of it in your own conscience. *Give double diligence to make your calling and election sure.* See to it with earnest solicitude, that you be not mistaken in so necessary and important a concern; for a minister who preaches up the religion of Christ, yet has no evidence of it in his own heart, will lie under vast discouragements in his work; and if he be not a real christian himself, he will justly fall under double damnation. Keep a constant holy jealousy over your own soul, lest *while you preach to* the eternal salvation of *others, yourself become a cast-away,* or disapproved of God, and for ever banished from his presence; 1 Cor. ix. 27. Call your own soul often to account: examine the temper, the frame, and the motions of your heart with all holy severity, so that the evidences of your faith in Jesus, and your repentance for sin, and your conversion to God, be many and fair, be strong and unquestionable; that you may walk on with courage and joyful hope toward heaven, and lead on the flock of Christ thither with holy assurance and joy.

II. Take heed to your own religion, as to the liveliness and power of it. Let it not be a sleepy thing in your bosom, but sprightly and active, and always awake. Keep your own soul

near God in the way in which you first came near him, i. e. *by the mediation of Jesus Christ.* Let no distance and estrangement grow between God and you, between Christ and you. Maintain much converse with God by prayer, by reading his word, by holy meditation, by heavenly-mindedness, and universal holiness in the frame and temper of your own spirit. Converse with God and with your own soul in the duties of secret religion, and walk always in the world as under the eye of God. Every leader of the flock of God, should act as Moses did, should live *as seeing him that is invisible*; Heb. xi. 27.

III. Take heed to your personal religion, as to the growth and increase of it. Let it be ever upon the advancing hand. Be tenderly sensible of every wandering affection towards vanity, every deviation from God and your duty, every rising sin, every degree of growing distance from God. *Watch and pray* much and converse much with God, as one of his ministring angels in flesh and blood, and grow daily in conformity to God and your blessed Saviour, who is the first minister of his Father's kingdom, and the fairest image of his Father. Such a conduct will have several happy influences towards the fulfilling of your ministry, and will render you more fit for every part of your public ministrations.

1. Hereby you will improve in your acquaintance with divine things, and the spiritual parts of religion, that you may better teach the people both truth and duty. Those who are much with God may expect and hope, that he will teach them the secret of his covenant, and the ways of his mercy, by communications of divine light to their spirits. *The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will shew them his covenant*; Psalm xxv. 14. Luther used to say, that *he got more knowledge in a short time by prayer sometimes, than by the study and labour of many hours.*

2. Hereby you will be more fit to speak to the great God at all times, as a son with holy confidence in him as your father, and you will be better prepared to pray with and for the people. You will have an habitual readiness for the work, and increase in the gift of prayer. You will obtain a treasure and fluency of sacred language, suited to address God on all occasions. Hereby you will gain a freedom and interest in the throne of grace, and become a more powerful intercessor for your people, under the influence of Jesus the great Intercessor, who is ever near the throne; and be sure you improve your interest in heaven, for the edification of those committed to your care.

3. Hereby you will be kept near to the spring of all grace, to the fountain of strength and comfort in your work: you will be ever deriving fresh anointings, fresh influences, daily lights

d powers, to enable you to go through all the difficulties and ours of your sacred office.

4. Hereby, when you come among men in your sacred mi-itrations, you will appear, and speak, and act like a man come m God; *like Moses with a lustre upon his face*, when he had nversed with God; like a minister of the court of heaven em-oyed in a divine office; like a messenger of grace who hath it been with God, and received instructions from him; and the orld will *take cognizance of you, as they did of the apostles, at they were men who had been with Jesus*; Acts iv. 13.

5. This will better furnish you for serious converse with the ils and consciences of men, by giving you experimental ac-aintance with the things of religion, as they are transacted in e heart. You will learn more of the springs of sin and holi-ss, the workings of nature and grace, *the deceitfulness of sin*, e subtilty of temptation, and the holy skill of counterworking e snares of sin, and *the devices of Satan*, and all their designs ruin the souls of men. You will speak with more divine com-ssion to wretched and perishing mortals; with more life and wer to stupid sinners; with more sweetness and comfort to rakened consciences, and with more awful language and influ-ce to backsliding christians. You will hereby learn to preach ore powerfully in all respects for the salvation of men, and talk ore feelingly on every sacred subject, when the power and sense d life of godliness are kept up in your own spirit. Then on me special occasions it may not be improper to borrow the lan-age of David the prophet, and of St. Paul and St. John, two eat apostles, though it may be best in public to speak in the ural number, *We have believed, therefore we have spoken; what have heard and learned from Christ, we have declared unto u; what we have seen and felt*, we are bold to speak; attend d *we will tell you what God has done for our souls*. You ay then at proper seasons convince, direct and comfort others the same words of light and power, of precept and promise, joy and hope, which have convinced, directed and comforted u: a word coming from the heart will sooner reach the heart.

SECT. II.—*Of a Minister's private Studies.*

The second general head of exhortation relates to your own ivate studies: take heed to these, that you may better fulfil ur ministry. *Give yourself* (saith St. Paul to Timothy) *to ding, to meditation, that your profiting may appear to all*; Tim. iv. 13, 15. These private studies are of various kinds, ether you consider them in general, as necessary to furnish e mind with knowledge for the office of the ministry; or in rticular, as necessary to prepare discourses for the pulpit.

1st, Those general studies may be just mentioned in this

place, which furnish the mind with knowledge for the work of a minister; for though it is known you have passed through the several stages of science in your younger years, and have made a good improvement in them, yet a review of many of them will be found needful, and an increase in some (so far as leisure permits) may be proper and useful, even through the whole course of life. Among these some are necessary to improve the reasoning faculty, to teach us to distinguish truth from falsehood, and to judge aright concerning any subjects that are proposed to us; such are the art of logic, which gives us rules for judging and reasoning, and some of the speculative principles of the mathematics, particularly the demonstrations of geometry, and the inferences or corollaries that are drawn from them, wherein we have the clearest and fairest examples to teach us reasoning by the practice of it.

And as all arts and sciences have a connection with and influence upon each other, so for a divine as well as for a physician, it is needful there should be some knowledge of nature and the powers of it in the heavens and earth, in the air and water, that we may thereby learn and teach more of the glories of our Creator, and more easily distinguish between what is natural and what is miraculous. This will enable us also to think and speak more justly almost upon any subject which occurs in our private reading, in our public ministry, or in our daily conversation; and particularly it is useful, if not necessary for a minister to have some acquaintance with human nature, in the two constituent parts of it, soul and body, and in the powers and passions of mankind, that we may better distinguish how far particular actions are natural and mechanical, and how far they are voluntary and moral, virtuous or sinful; how far they are influenced by *flesh and blood*, and how far they are under the government of the will, which is of great importance in order to judge right in many cases of conscience, and to give directions for the moral or religious life.

It is needful also, and of considerable moment, that a divine should be acquainted with the arts of method and of oratory, the one to range our thoughts and discourses in due order, and to set the things of God before men in the plainest, the most conspicuous and convincing light; and the other to win upon the hearts of the hearers, and to lead them by a sweet and powerful influence on their affections, into the love and practice of religion. There are other parts of science which are necessary for ministers to be well acquainted with, and particularly those which are the foundations of all religion; such as the knowledge of God and his attributes by the light of nature and reason, the knowledge of man as a creature of God, in his natural dependance upon his Creator, and in his moral relations both to God and his fellow-

creatures, together with the obligations to duty which are derived thence, and which branch themselves into all the parts of morality and religion. It is requisite to have some acquaintance also with the heathen writers, the folly and madness of pagan idolatry, the history and the customs of ancient ages and nations, and the history of the church of the Jews and of christians, in order to establish our faith in the doctrines of christianity, and to prove the religion of Christ to be divine, and that the bible is the word of God.

When this great point is once settled, then our chief business will be to understand this bible, and to find out the meaning of the holy scriptures; and for this end (as well as for the reading of ancient heathen authors) it is requisite that we should have some skill in the tongues: and particularly those wherein the scriptures were written, viz. Hebrew and Greek, that we may be able at least to judge a little for ourselves, concerning the translation of any text in our language. For this purpose also some knowledge of the customs of the ancients, both Jews and Pagans, is necessary, in order to give us a juster idea of many things recorded in scripture; and we should get some acquaintance with geography and chronology, which will be of great service to set before our eyes, the distant places and times wherein those ancient affairs were transacted, which the scripture relates, and without which the history of scripture, as well as some of the prophecies, can never be well understood.

Nor is it an unprofitable study to read some of the writings of the fathers, who lived in the very first ages of christianity, that we may know the sentiments and customs of those who lived nearest to the days of the apostles; this may give a little light to some expressions and phrases used in scripture, and enable us sometimes better to understand what the evangelists and apostles wrote. But it must be confessed, that immediately after the apostolic age, and indeed before the apostles were dead, there were so many corruptions and mistakes both in faith and worship, so many fancies and inventions of men crept into the church, that there is scarce one ancient writer perfectly free, and not one of them to be entirely trusted, as a director of our consciences, or as a regulator of our belief or practice. St. Paul himself tells us, that in his days *the mystery of iniquity began to work*; 2 Thess. ii. 7. The fathers, as they are called, have many weak and fanciful things in their writings; it is the bible alone that must be our guide; *the word of the Lord is pure and perfect.*

Above all things therefore, the constant reading and study of the holy scriptures are necessary, in order to a larger and more complete acquaintance with our divine religion. Here our faith and conscience may rest safely, in all our enquiries about matters of

belief or practice. The doctrines, the commands, the types and histories, the prophecies, the promises and threatenings of the word of God, are the brightest, and noblest part of the knowledge of a minister. These are the things *that are able to make us and our hearers wise to salvation, and to furnish the man of God for every good word and work*; 2 Tim. iii. 15, 16. Let us never imagine we know enough of divine things, while we dwell in flesh and blood. God and Christ, and the things of heaven, are fruitful and inexhaustible subjects of our enquiry and knowledge; they are so in this world, and they will be so for ever in the world to come. *The angels of God pry further into them*, nor shall the sons of men ever know them to perfection. These will be the glorious objects of everlasting study, and everlasting entertainment.

I might add in the last place, that there are some other parts of human knowledge, which, though they are not necessary, yet are greatly ornamental to a minister in the present age, which is so much enriched with knowledge, viz. some further acquaintance with modern geography, the nations and kingdoms of this world; some general view of astronomy, the appearances, and seeming or real motions of the sun and moon, stars and planets, and of this earth, which is now generally agreed to be one of the planetary worlds; to which we may join some skill in philology, criticism on the writings of men as well as on scripture, and various parts of science which go under the name of the *belles lettres*, or polite learning. These are such sort of accomplishments of the mind as will embellish the character of a minister, and render his person and his labours more acceptable to the world.

But amongst all these enquiries and studies, and these various improvements of the mind, let us take heed that none of them carry our thoughts away too far from our chief and glorious design, that is, *the ministry of the gospel of Christ*. Let none of them intrench upon those hours which should be devoted to our study of the bible, or preparations for the pulpit: and wheresoever we find our inclinations too much attached to any particular human science, let us set a guard upon ourselves, lest it rob us of our diviner studies, and our best improvement. A minister should remember, that himself, with all his studies, is consecrated to the service of the sanctuary: let every thing be done therefore with a view to our great end: let all the rest of our knowledge be like lines drawn from the vast circumference of univesal nature, pointing to that divine centre, *God and religion*: and let us pursue every part of science, with a design to gain better qualifications thereby for our sacred work. Forgive me, my friends, that I have dwelt so long on these general preparations for the work of the ministry. Though they are

learnt at the academy, yet I can by no means think it proper they should be left there and forgotten.

2nd. I come to speak of those particular studies which are preparatory for the public work of the pulpit; and here when you retire to compose a sermon, let your great end be ever kept in view, i. e. to say something for *the honour of God, for the glory of Christ, for the salvation of the souls of men*; and for this purpose a few rules may perhaps be of some service. One great and general rule is, Ask advice of heaven by prayer about every part of your preparatory studies; seek the direction and assistance of the Spirit of God, for inclining your thoughts to proper subjects, for guiding you to proper scriptures, and framing your whole sermon both as to the matter and manner, that it may attain the divine and sacred ends proposed. But I insist not largely on this here, because prayers for aids and counsels from heaven belong to every part of your work, both in the closet, in the pulpit, and in your daily conversation. The particular rules for your preparatory work may be such as these:

I. In chusing your texts or themes of discourse, seek such as are most suited to do good to souls, according to the present wants, dangers, and circumstances of the people; whether for the instruction of the ignorant; for the conviction of the stupid and senseless; for the melting and softening of the obstinate; for the conversion of the wicked; for the edification of converts; for the comfort of the timorous and mournful; for gentle admonition of backsliders, or more severe reproof. Some acquaintance with the general case and character of your hearers is needful for this end.

II. In handling the text, divide, explain, illustrate, prove, convince, infer, and apply in such a manner, as to do real service to men, and honour to our Lord Jesus Christ. Do not say within yourself, How much or how elegantly I can talk upon such a text, but what can I say most usefully to those who hear me, for the instruction of their minds, for the conviction of their consciences, and for the persuasion of their hearts? Be not fond of displaying your learned criticisms in clearing up the terms and phrases of a text, where scholars only can be edified by them; nor spend away the precious moments of the congregation, in making them hear you explain what is clear enough before, and hath no need of explaining; nor in proving that which is so obvious that it wants no proof. This is little better than trifling with God and man. Think not, How can I make a sermon soonest and easiest? but how I can make the most profitable sermon for my hearers: not what fine things I can say, either in a way of criticism or philosophy, or in a way of oratory and harangue, but what powerful words I can speak to impress the consciences of them that hear with a serious and lasting sense

as revealed in scripture; to the dignity of the person of Christ the Redeemer, *the only begotten Son of God and the Son of man*; to the covenant of grace, of pardon and salvation made with men, in and through this glorious Mediator; to the incarnation, life and death, the sacrifice and atonement, the resurrection, intercession, and universal government and lordship of Jesus Christ, and his *coming to judge the world at the last day*; and to the appointed methods of our participation of the blessings which he bestows. These illustrious doctrines are big with a thousand duties both to God and man; all the practices of faith and love, repentance and universal holiness flow from them by plain and easy deduction: All the sacred rules of piety and virtue, sobriety, justice and goodness, the holy skill of living and dying in the love and favour of God, are the most natural and happy inferences from these sublime truths of our religion. We preach the gospel in a very defective manner, if we neglect the moral or divine duties which are derived from the faith of Christ.

If you would raise the hearts of your hearers to a just and high esteem of this gospel of grace, and impress them with an awful sense of the divine importance and worth of it, be not afraid to lay human nature low, and to represent it in its ruins by the fall of *the first Adam*. It is the vain exaltation of ruined nature, that makes the gospel so much despised in our age. Labour therefore to make them see and feel the deplorable state of mankind as described in scripture, *that by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin*, and a sentence of *death hath passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*: let them hear and know that *Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, that there is none righteous, no, not one; that every mouth may be stopped and all the world may appear guilty before God*. Let them know *that it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*; that *we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any good thing*: that *we are without strength, alienated from the life of God through the ignorance and darkness of our understandings, and are by nature children of disobedience, and children of wrath*; that we are unable to recover ourselves out of these depths of wretchedness without the condescensions of divine grace, and that the gospel of Christ is introduced as the only sovereign remedy and relief under all this desolation of nature, this overwhelming distress; neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved; Acts iv. 12. And they that wilfully and obstinately reject this message of divine love, must perish without remedy and without hope; *for there remains no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful expectation of vengeance*; Heb. x. 26. By this conduct you will approve yourself to be a faithful messenger of

hrist in good earnest, *a minister of the New Testament*, and *a* *orkman that needs not to be ashamed*, if you take special seasons discover to men what the word of God reveals concerning eir misery, and declare to them *the whole council of God* for eir salvation. I entreat you my dear friend and brother, to et it deeply imprest on your heart, that as (I believe) your real id sincere design, is to save the souls of men from sin and eter- al death; so it is the gospel of Christ which is the only instru- ent whereby you can ever hope to attain this blessed end; and at for two reasons.

(1.) It is this gospel, which in its own nature, is most hap- ly suited in all the parts of it to this great design; and no other hemes which the wit or reason of man can contrive are so: It the voice of pardoning grace and reconciliation to God by esus Christ, that powerfully allures and encourages the awa- ned sinner, to return to his duty to God and his Maker: It is e promise of divine assistance to enable us to mortify sin, and practice holiness, which animates the feeble creature to at- mpt it: It is the attractive view of heavenly blessedness as vealed in the gospel, that invites the soul onward to make its ay through all the dangerous enticements and terrors of this orld, which is at enmity with God. The divine fitness of this ospel of grace, to restore fallen man to the favour and image his Maker, is so various and astonishing, that to describe it all instances, would require a large volume.

And (2.) As the gospel is so happily suited to attain these ds, so it is the only effectual means that God has appointed, in e lips of his ministers, for this purpose. It is with these won- ous discoveries of this gospel, that he furnished the minds and s of the fishermen and illiterate persons, when he sent them rth to convert and save a perishing world: These were the cred weapons with which they were armed, when our exalted aviour gave them commission to travel through the dominions Satan, which were spread over the heathen countries, and to ise up a kingdom for himself amongst them. It was with inciples, rules and motives derived from this gospel, that they ere sent to attack the reigning vices of mankind, to reform obligate nations, and to turn them *from dumb idols to serve the ving God*. And though St. Paul were a man of learning above e rest, yet he was not sent to preach *the enticing words of man's isdom*, nor to talk as the disputers of the age and philosophers d in their schools; but his business was to *preach Christ cruci- d*: though this doctrine of the cross and the Son of God hang- g upon it, was *a stumbling block to the Jews, and the Greeks unted it foolishness, yet to them that were called both Jews and reeks*, this doctrine was *the power of God, and the wisdom of od* for the salvation of men. And therefore St. Paul deter-

mined to know nothing among them, in comparison of the doctrine of Christ and him crucified. These were *the weapons of his warfare which were mighty through God, to the pulling down of the strong holds of sin and Satan* in the hearts of men, and brought *every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.* It was by the ministration of this gospel, that the fornicators were made chaste and holy, and idolaters became worshippers of the God of heaven; that thieves learnt honest labour, and the covetous were taught to seek treasures in heaven; the drunkards grew out of love with their cups, and renounced all intemperance; the revilers governed their tongues and spoke well of their neighbours, and the cruel extortioners and oppressors learned to practise compassion and charity: These vilest of sinners, these children of hell, were made heirs of the kingdom of heaven, *being washed, being sanctified, being justified in the name of the Lord Jesus,* and by the Spirit of our God; 1 Cor. vi. 9, &c.

Had you all the refined science of Plato or Socrates, all the skill in morals that ever was attained by Zeno, Seneca or Epictetus; were you furnished with all the flowing oratory of Cicero, or the thunder of Demosthenes; were all these talents and excellencies united in one man, and you were the person so richly endowed, and could you employ them all in every sermon you preach, yet you could have no reasonable hope to convert and save one soul in Great Britain, where the gospel is published, while you lay aside the glorious gospel of Christ, and leave it entirely out of your discourses. Let me proceed yet further and say, had you the fullest acquaintance that ever man acquired with all the principles and duties of natural religion, both in its regard to God and to your fellow-creatures, had you the skill and tongue of an angel to range all these in their fairest order, to place them in their fullest light, and to pronounce and represent the whole law of God with such force and splendour to a British auditory, as was done to the Israelites at mount Sinai, you might perhaps lay the consciences of men under deep conviction, *for by the law is the knowledge of sin:* But I am fully persuaded you would never reconcile one soul to God, you would never change the heart of one sinner, nor bring him into the favour of God, nor fit him for the joys of heaven, without this blessed gospel which is committed to your hands.

The great and glorious God is jealous of his own authority, and of the honour of his Son Jesus: nor will he condescend to bless any other methods for obtaining so divine an end, that what he himself has prescribed; nor will his holy Spirit, whose office is *to glorify Christ,* stoop to concur with any other sort of means for the saving of sinners, where the name and offices of his Son,

the only appointed Saviour, are known, and despised and neglected. It is the gospel alone that is *the power of God to salvation*. If the prophets will not *stand in his counsel*, nor cause the people *to hear his words*, they will never be able to turn Israel *from the iniquity of their ways, nor the evil of their doings*; Jer. xxiii. 22.

Perhaps it may be said in opposition to this advice, that the peculiar doctrines and discoveries of the gospel of Christ, were necessary to be published in a more large and particular manner, at the first institution of our religion, and to be insisted upon with greater frequency among the Jews, and especially among the Gentiles, who before were unacquainted with the name, the history and the several offices of the blessed Jesus: but there is no such need of repeating them in christian countries, where people are trained up from their infancy to know *Jesus Christ the Son of God, the Saviour of the world:* and therefore it is more needful in our land to preach upon the natural duties of piety towards God, of justice and truth and goodness toward our neighbour, and self-government and sobriety with regard to ourselves. And this may be done with good success among the people, upon the plain principles and motives which arise from the very nature of things, from the beauty and excellency of virtue, and its tendency to make all men happy, and the natural deformity of vice, and the mischiefs that attend it. But give me leave to answer this objection with these three or four enquiries;

First, Was it not the special design of these doctrines of Christ, when they were first graciously communicated to the world, to reform the vices of mankind which reason could not reform, and to restore the world to piety and virtue, for which the powers of reason appeared so feeble and impotent? The nations of the earth had made long and fruitless essays, what the light of nature and philosophy would do, to bring wandering degenerate man back again to his Maker: fruitless and long essays indeed, when after some thousands of years the world, who had forgotten their Maker and his laws, still run further from God, and plunged themselves into all abominable impieties and corrupt practices! Now if the all-wise God saw the gospel of Christ, to be so fit and happy an instrument, for the recovery of wretched man to religion and morality; if he furnished his apostles with these doctrines for this very purpose, and pronounced a blessing upon them as his own appointment, why should we not suppose, that this gospel is still as fit in its own nature for the same purposes as it was at first? And why may we not hope, the same heavenly blessing in a great measure to remain upon it, for these purposes, to the end of the world? While we introduce these divine topics, drawn from the gospel

of Christ, to enforce piety and virtue upon the consciences of men; God forbid that we should abandon those arguments, drawn from the nature of things, and from human reason: The gospel does by no means exclude them, but clears and enlightens and advances them all; and gives them ten-fold power for the purposes for which they are designed. The blessed apostles themselves, sometimes made use of them; and they may be spread abroad in a rich variety, by every preacher of the gospel to much better purpose, than a Seneca or an Epictetus could display them. All kind of efforts are necessary, and every sort of weapon may be used in its proper place, to make assaults upon the kingdom of Satan in the hearts of men; but it is evident, that the divine principles and motives of christianity were sent us down from heaven, as more sovereign remedies for the mortal diseases of the soul, and far more effectually for the reformation of mankind.

Secondly, If the beautiful ideas of virtue and religion, and the natural tendency of it to make men happy, be such sufficient motives to enforce the practice of it, I would enquire, why was not the Gentile world reformed without the gospel? Why were the polite and knowing nations so abominably and almost universally sunk into shameful vices? Why did not the self-sufficient reward of virtue constrain greater numbers of mankind to change their manners, and to practise good morality? If this had been the best and most effectual way, of changing the hearts and of reforming the profligate lives of men, why was not St. Paul sent only or chiefly with these principles and instructions of reason, to talk of the divine beauty of religion and excellency of virtue amongst them, and the advantages that it brought into human society and private life? What need was there that he should be commissioned to preach the doctrine of *the cross of Christ*, and the love of the Son of God descending from heaven to die for sinners? What makes him dwell so much upon the recovery of a sinful world to God, by the atonement and sufferings of the blessed Jesus, as a means and motive to persuade sinners to forsake their sins, and to be reconciled to God? Why are the evangelic topics so often insisted on, and represented in lively language, for the encouragement of virtue and piety, and as a guard against sin? What need had he of the history of a *crucified Son of God rising from the dead, ascending to heaven, sitting at the right-hand of God, interceding for sinners*, and governing the world, in order to reform mankind from vice and impiety? Why does the scripture tell us, that the hearts of men are to be *purified by faith, that believing on the Son of God*, is the way *to get the victory over the world*? What need was there that St. Paul should teach us, that our sins are to be mortified in us, by the assistance of the Holy

Spirit, or that St. Peter or St. John should tell us, that *we must be born again and made new creatures by the word of God*, and by this blessed Spirit and its influences? Were all these doctrines so needful in the primitive days, and attended with such illustrious and divine success, and are they grown useless and needless now.

Let me enquire in the *third* place, Are all the hearers that make up our public assemblies, so well acquainted with the doctrines of Christ and the gospel in our day, that they have no need to be taught them? Have they all enjoyed so happy an education from their infancy, as to understand the principles of the christian religion, and the peculiar articles of the faith, which are so necessary to restore sinners to a divine life? Do they so much as know that they *are by nature dead in trespasses and sins?* And do they know how to apply those vital truths to the blessed purposes of godliness? I am sure when we make particular enquiries, we find many of them ignorant enough both of themselves and their Saviour, and they *have need to be taught, the first principles of the oracles of God*, and the faith of Jesus.

Shall I enquire yet further, Is this a day when we should leave the peculiar articles of the religion of Christ, out of our ministrations, when the truth of them is boldly called in question, and denied by such multitudes who dwell among us? Is this a proper time for us to forget the name of Christ in our public labours, when the witty talents and reasonings of men join together, and labour hard to cast out his sacred name with contempt and scorn? Is it so seasonable a practice in this age to neglect these evangelic themes, and to preach up virtue, without the special principles and motives, with which Christ has furnished us, when there are such numbers amongst us who are fond of heathenism, who are endeavouring to introduce it again into a christian country, and to spread the poison of infidelity through a nation called by his name? If this be our practice, our hearers will begin to think indeed, that infidels may have some reason on their side, and that the glorious doctrines of the gospel of Christ, are not so necessary as our fathers thought them, while they find no mention of them in the pulpit, no use of them in our discourses from week to week, and from month to month, and yet we profess to preach for the salvation of souls. Will this be our glory to imitate the heathen philosophers, and to drop the gospel of the Son of God? To be complimented by unbelievers as men of superior sense and as deep reasoners, while we abandon the faith of Jesus, and starve the souls of our hearers, by neglecting to distribute to them this *bread of life which came down from heaven?* O let us who are his ministers remember the last words of our departing Lord; *Go, preach the gospel to every nation: he that believeth and*

is baptized shall be saved; and he that believeth not shall be damned; and lo, I am with you alway, to the end of the world; Mark xvi 15, 16. Mat. xxviii. 20. Let us fulfil the command, let us publish the threatening with the promise, and let us wait for the attendant blessing.

Wheresoever this gospel is published with clear and proper evidence, the belief of it is made necessary to salvation, and it is part of the commission of ministers to make known this to the people: nor is there any thing else which can stand in the room and stead of this gospel, or attain those happy purposes for which this holy institution was designed. Unless therefore you have such an high esteem for the gospel of Christ, and such a sense of its divine worth and power, as to take it along with you when you desire to save souls, you had better lay down the ministry and abandon your sacred profession; for you will but *spend your strength for nought*, and waste your breath in vain declamations: you will neither *save your own soul, nor them that hear you;* and you will have a terrible account to give at the last day, what you have done with this gospel which was entrusted with you, for the salvation of men: *you have hid this divine talent in the earth*, you have traded entirely with your own stock, *you have compassed yourself about with sparks of light of your own kindling, and you must lie down in sorrow with eternal loss.*

Forgive me, my dear brother and friend, and you, my beloved and honoured brethren in the ministry, forgive me, if I have indulged too much vehemence in this part of my discourse; if I have given too great a loose to pathetic language on this needful subject. I doubt not but your own consciences bear me witness that this elevated voice, is not the voice of reproof, but of friendly warning; and, I persuade myself, that you all join with me in this sentiment, that if ever we are so happy as to reform the lives of our hearers, to convert their hearts to God and to train them up for heaven, it must be done by the principles of the gospel of Christ. On the occasion of such an head of advice, therefore, I assure myself you will forgive these warm emotions of spirit. Can there be any juster cause or season to exert fervour and zeal, than while we are pleading for the name and honour and kingdom of our adored Jesus? Let him live, let him reign for ever on his throne of glory; let him live upon our lips, and reign in all our ministrations: let him live in the hearts of all our hearers; let him live and reign through Great Britain and through all the nations, till iniquity be subdued, till the kingdom of Satan be destroyed, and the whole world are become willing subjects to the sceptre of his grace! Thus have I finished my third exhortation relating to the preparation of your sermons for the pulpit.

IV. In addressing your discourse to your hearers, remem-

r to distinguish the different characters of saints and sinners, converted and the unconverted, the sincere christian and the mal professor, the stupid and the awakened, the diligent and cksliding, the fearful or humble soul, and the obstinate and esumptuous: and in various seasons introduce a word for each them. Thus you will *divide the word of God aright, and d give to every one their portion;* 2 Tim. ii. 15. The gene- l way of speaking to all persons in one view and under one aracter, as though all your hearers were certainly true chris- ns and converted already, and wanted only a little further re- rmation of heart and life, is too common in the world, but I nk it is a dangerous way of preaching: it hath a powerful d unhappy tendency to lull unregenerate sinners asleep in curity, to flatter and deceive them with dreams of happiness, d make their consciences easy without a real conversion of art to God.

Let your hearers know that there is a vast and unspeakable ference betwixt a saint and a sinner, one in Christ and one out Christ; between one whose heart is in the state of corrupt ture or unrenewed, and one that is in a state of grace and re- wed to faith and holiness; between one who is only *born of e flesh and is a child of wrath, and one who is born again, born of the spirit, and is become a child of God,* a mem- r of Christ, and an heir of heaven. Let them know that this stinction is great and necessary; and it is not made (as some ve imagined) by the water of baptism, but by the operations the word and Spirit of God on the hearts of men, and by eir diligent attendance on all the appointed means and methods converting grace. It is a most real change and of infinite portance, and however it has been derided by men, it is glo- ous in the eyes of God, and it will be made to appear so at the st day in the eyes of men and angels: but it will bring with it finite terror to those, who thought themselves safe in a common reless profession of christianity, without any inward and di- ne change of heart. That little treatise written by the learned Ir. John Jennings concerning the preaching of Christ and ex- erimental preaching, has many valuable hints relating to these vo last particulars of my exhortation.

V. Lead your hearers wisely into the knowledge of the uth, and teach them to build their faith upon solid grounds. et them first know why they are christians, that they may be rmly established in the belief and profession of the religion of hrist; that they may be guarded against all the assaults of temp- ation and infidelity in this evil day, and may be able to *render a eason of the hope that is in them*: furnish them with arguments opposition to the rude cavils and blasphemies, which are fre- uently thrown out in the world, against the name and doctrines f the holy Jesus.

Then let the great, the most important and most necessary articles of our religion, be set before your hearers in their fairest light. Convey them into the understandings of those of meanest capacity, by condescending sometimes to plain and familiar methods of speech; prove these important doctrines and duties to them by all proper reasons and arguments: but as to the introducing of controversies into the pulpit, be not fond of it, nor frequent in it: in your common course of preaching avoid disputes, especially about things of less importance, without an apparent call of providence. Religious controversies frequently introduced without real necessity, have an unhappy tendency to hurt the spirit of true godliness, both in the hearts of preachers and hearers; I Tim. iv. 7. And have a care of laying too much stress, on the peculiar notions and terms and phrases, of the little sects and parties in christianity; take heed that you do not make your hearers bigots and uncharitable, while you endeavour to make them knowing christians. Establish them in all the chief and most important articles of the gospel of Christ, without endeavouring to render those who differ from you odious in the sight of your hearers. Whensoever you are constrained to declare your disapprobation of particular opinions, keep up and manifest your love to the persons of those who espouse them, and especially if they are persons of virtue and piety.

VI. Do not content yourself to compose a sermon of mere doctrinal truths and articles of belief, but into every sermon (if possible) bring something practical. It is true, knowledge is the foundation of practice; the head must be furnished with a degree of knowledge, or the heart cannot be good: but take heed that dry speculations and mere schemes of orthodoxy, do not take up too large a part of your composures; and be sure to impress it frequently on your hearers, that holiness is the great end of all knowledge, and of much more value than the sublimest speculations; nor is there any doctrine, but what requires, some correspondent practice of piety or virtue. And among the practical parts of christianity, sometimes make it your business to insist on those subjects which are inward and spiritual, and which go by the name of experimental religion. Now and then take such themes as these, (viz.) the first awakenings of the conscience of a sinner by some special and awful providence, by some particular passages in the word of God, in pious writings, or public sermons, the inward terrors of mind and fears of the wrath of God, which sometimes accompany such awakenings; the temptations which arise to divert the mind from them, and to soothe up the sinner in the course of his iniquities; the inward conflicts of the spirit in these seasons, the methods of relief under such temptations, the arguments that may fix the heart and

ll for God against all the enticements and oppositions of the rld; the labours of the conscience fluctuating between hope d fear; the rising and working of indwelling sin in the heart, e subtle excuses framed by the flesh for the indulgence of it; *peace of God* derived from the gospel allaying the inward rors of the soul under a sense of guilt; the victories obtained er strong corruptions and powerful temptations, by the faith unseen things, by repeated addresses to God in prayer, trusting in Jesus the great Mediator, *who is made of God us wisdom and righteousness, sanctification and redemption.*

While you are treating on these subjects, give me leave to t you again in mind, that it will sometimes have a very happy luence on the minds of hearers, to speak what you have learnt m your own experience, though there is no need that you ould tell them publicly it is your own: you may inform them at you borrowed from your own observation, and from the exrience of christians, ancient or modern, who have passed rough the same trials, who have wrestled with the same corptions of nature, who have grappled with the same difficulties, d at last have been made conquerors over the same temptans. *As face answers face in the glass, so the heart of one an answers to another*; and the workings of the different prinples of flesh and spirit, corrupt nature and renewing grace, ve a great deal of resemblance in the hearts of different pers who have passed through them. This sort of instruction awn from just and solid experience, will animate and encouge the young christian, that begins to shake off the slavery of n, and to set his face toward heaven: this will make it appear at religion is no impracticable thing: it will establish and comrt the professors of the gospel, and excite them with new gour to proceed in the way of faith and holiness; it will raise a edfast courage and hope, and will generally obtain a most ppy effect upon the souls of the hearers, beyond all that you n say to them from principles of mere reasoning and dry spelation; and especially where you have the concurrent experince of any scriptural examples.

VII. Whether you are discouring of doctrine or duty, take eat care that you impose nothing on your hearers, either as a atter of faith or practice, but what your Lord and Master hrist Jesus has imposed. These are the limits of the commison which Christ gave to the first ministers of the gospel; Mat. xviii. 19, 20. *Go disciple all nations, baptizing them* who are illing to become my disciples, and *teach them to observe whatever I have commanded you.* He has not given leave to his inisters, whether separate in their single congregations, or nited in synods or councils, the least degree of power to appoint e new article of faith, nor to enjoin any new sort of devotion

or practice; not to impose any one right or ceremony of worship, but what he himself has framed and enjoined. And yet, to our universal reproach, there is scarce any party of christians, but hath been too ready to impose some doctrines upon the belief of their proselytes, which Christ has not imposed, or to require of them some practices or some abstinences, about meats or days, or things indifferent which Christ has not required. It is this assuming power, that has turned christianity into an hundred shapes, and every one of them in some degree unlike the glorious gospel. It is this has brought in all the superstitions and fooleries, the splendid vanities, the useless austerities and the childish trifles of the Greek and Roman churches; and it is this has too far corrupted the purity and defaced the beauty of most of those churches who boast of reformation, and wear the protestant name.

Now to discourage and deter us all from such presumption: let us remember that this imposing spirit has generally found it necessary to support its commands with penalties and persecutions. Hence proceed the imprisonments and murders, the cruelties, the tortures, and the wild and bloody fury that has ravaged the nations of Christendom, and cast a foul and lasting blot and infamy, upon the religion of the blessed Jesus. Blessed Jesus! when shall this stain be washed out from thy religion, and this scandal die? If we survey the persecuting laws and edicts that have been framed and executed in Great-Britain, or in foreign nations, in ancient or later times, we shall seldom find that the plain and explicit doctrines and duties of the gospel have been guarded with these terrors: but it is the wretched inventions of men, it is the institutions of priests, or the appointments of kings, (all which have been mere additions to the word of God) that have had the honour, shall I say, or the infamy to be thus guarded with bloody severities, and with engines of death. It is the absolute determination of men, upon some points which Christ has not plainly determined; it is some forms of pretended orthodoxy which scripture knows nothing of, or at least which the word of God has not made necessary to our faith; it is some ceremonies or modes of worship, which Christ and his apostles never commanded, that have generally been the shameful occasion of excommunications, and prisons, of banishments and martyrdoms. See to it therefore with a holy and religious care, when you dictate any thing to your hearers as necessary to be believed or practised, that you have the plain and evident direction of scripture to support you in it.

It is this corrupt mixture of human opinions, and human forms of divine service, that has so disguised the pure religion of the gospel, as to tempt the deist to renounce it entirely. The

pure religion of Jesus has divine charms in it, and is, like the author, *altogether lovely:* but when on one hand it is corrupted and debased, by new doctrines foisted into our creed, and new mysteries which men have invented to overload our faith; when it is incumbered by new rituals of worship, or imposed rules and practices on the other hand, which the holy scripture has not enjoined; when men make articles of faith, which are no where plainly revealed; when they pronounce that to be a sin, which God hath no where forbidden, and appoint that to be a duty which God hath never commanded, (which I take to be the very nature of superstition) it casts such a veil of deformity over the beauties of the gospel, that it is no wonder if the men of reason start at it, and pronounce against it. While we hold forth this confused mass and mixture of things divine and human, and call it the religion of Christ, we tempt the men of infidelity to establish themselves in their unbelief; and they will hardly now give a favourable hearing to the pure doctrine of the gospel, because they have been so much disgusted with the sight of it, in a corrupt and superstitious dress.

But in this state of frailty and imperfection, dangers attend us on either hand. As we must take heed, that we do not add the fancies of men to our divine religion, so we should take equal care, that we do not curtail the appointments of Christ. With sacred vigilance and zeal, we should maintain the plain, express, and necessary articles, that we find evidently written in the word of God, and suffer none of them to be lost through our default. The world has been so long imposed upon, by these shameful additions of men to the gospel of Christ, that they seem now to be resolved to bear them no longer. But they are unhappily running into another extreme: because several sects and parties of christians have tacked on so many false and unbecoming ornaments to christianity, they resolve to deliver her from these disguises; but while they are paring off all this foreign trumpery, they too often cut her to the quick, and sometimes let out her life-blood, (if I may so express it) and maim her of her very limbs and vital parts. Because so many irrational notions and follies have been mixed up with the christian scheme, it is now a modish humour of the age to renounce almost every thing that reason doth not discover, and to reduce christianity itself to little more, than the light of nature and the dictates of reason. And under this sort of influence, there are some who are believers of the bible and the divine mission of Christ, and dare not renounce the gospel itself; yet they interpret some of the peculiar and express doctrines of it, into so poor, a narrow, and so jejune a meaning, that they suffer but little to remain, beyond the articles of natural religion. This leads some

of the learned and polite men of the age to explain away the sacrifice and the atonement made for our sins by the death of Christ, and to bereave our religion of the ordinary aids of the Holy Spirit, both which are so plainly and expressly revealed, and so frequently repeated in the New Testament, and which are two of the chief glories of the blessed gospel, and which perhaps are two of the chief uses of those sacred names *of the Son and the Holy Spirit*, into which we are baptized. It is this very humour that persuades some persons, to reduce the injury and mischief that we have sustained by the sin and fall of Adam, to so slight a bruise and so inconsiderable a wound; that a small matter of grace is needful for our recovery; and accordingly they impoverish the rich and admirable remedy of the gospel, to a very culpable degree, supposing no more to be necessary for the restoration of man, than those few ingredients, which in their opinion, make up the whole composition. Hence it comes to pass, that the doctrine of regeneration, or an entire change of corrupt nature by a principle of divine grace, is almost lost out of their christianity; or at least they suppose renewing grace and sanctification by the Holy Spirit and his assistances, to carry nothing more in them than the outward divine messages and discoveries of grace made and attested by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit to the christian world. This is a dangerous extreme on the other hand; I hope it will never obtain amongst us protestant dissenters: but since it is a fashionable error, you ought to set a stricter guard against it. As *he that adds or takes away from the words of the prophecy in the latter end of the book of God, is left under a curse*; Rev. xxii. 18, 19. so we should set a holy guard upon ourselves, lest we add any thing to the gospel of Christ, or take any thing from it, lest we expose ourselves to the same divine indignation.

To avoid both these extremes, permit me to give this general word of advice, and may God enable me to take it myself, (viz.) That in all our ministrations we keep a constant and religious eye upon the holy scripture, that in the necessary and most important points of doctrine or duty, we may teach our hearers neither more nor less than the scripture teaches. Our great business is to expound scripture, and enforce the word of God upon the minds and hearts of men: when therefore we explain the great and necessary points of the gospel contained in any one scripture, let us do it as much as possible by bringing other parts of scripture into the same view, that the word of God may be a comment on itself. When we have occasion to make inferences from it, let us take care that the connexion of them be strong and evident, and that they lie not far off at a distance, for in very distant inferences we are more liable to mistake. When we are delivering our own best opinions concerning divine subjects,

and giving our advice upon matters which are not so evidently and so expressly revealed, let us practise the modesty of the blessed apostle; 1 Cor. vii. 6, 10, 12, 25, &c. *Ispeak this by permission or advice, and not of commandment :* It is I speak it, and not the Lord: I have no plain commandment of the Lord about it, yet I give my judgment as one that has obtained mercy of the Lord to be faithful: I suppose therefore that in the present case, this is good to be practised, or that to be avoided: judge ye within yourselves, whether what I speak be agreeable to the word of God;* 1 Cor. xi. 13.

VIII. Remember that you have to do with the understanding, reason and memory of man, with the heart and conscience, with the will and affections; and therefore you must use every method of speech, which may be most proper to engage and employ, each of these faculties or powers of human nature, on the side of religion and in the interests of God and the gospel. Your first business is with the understanding, to make even the lower parts of your auditory know what you mean. Endeavour therefore to find out all the clearest and most easy forms of speech, to convey divine truths into the minds of men. Seek to obtain a perspicuous style and a clear and distinct manner of speaking, that you may effectually impress the understanding, while you pronounce the words; that you may so exactly imprint on the mind of the hearers, the same ideas which you yourself have conceived, that they may never mistake your meaning. This talent is sooner attained in younger years, by having some judicious friend to hear or read over your discourses, and inform you where perspicuity is wanting in your language, and where the hearers may be in danger of mistaking your sense. For want of this, some young preachers have fixed themselves in such an obscure way of writing and talking, as hath very much prevented their hearers from obtaining distinct ideas of their discourse. And if a man gets such an unhappy habit he will be sometimes talking to the air, and make the people stare at him, as though he were speaking some unknown language.

Remember you have to do with the reasoning powers of man, in preaching the gospel of Christ; for though this gospel be revealed from heaven, and could never be discovered by all the efforts of human reason, yet it is the reason of man must judge of several things relating to it, (viz.) It is reason must deter-

* I know these expressions of the apostle have another turn given them by some judicious commentators, (viz.) that the apostle had sufficient proof of the directions which he pronounces strongly to be the commands of Christ from other places of scripture; but that these which he expresses so cautiously, were directions which Christ had not elsewhere given us, but were made known to him by his own special inspiration. I am not fully assured which is the true sense, but I rather think it is to be understood as St. Paul's own private sense of things, who was a man favoured with many inspirations.

mine whether the evidence of its heavenly original be clear and strong: it is reason must judge whether such a doctrine or such a duty be contained in this gospel, or may be justly deduced from it: it is the work of human reason to compare one scripture with another, and to find out the true sense of any particular text by this means: and it is reason also must give its sentence, whether a doctrine, which is pretended to be contained in scripture, be contrary to the eternal and unchangeable relations and reasons of things; and if so, then reason may pronounce that this doctrine is not from God, or can be given us by divine revelation. Reason therefore hath its office and proper province, even in matters of revelation; yet it must always be confessed, that some propositions may be revealed to us from heaven, which may be so far superior to the limits and sphere of our reasoning powers in this present state, that human reason ought not to reject them, because it cannot fully understand them, nor clearly and perfectly reconcile them; unless it plainly see a natural absurdity in them, a real impossibility, or a plain inconsistence with other parts of divine revelation.

Well then, since you have to do with reasonable creatures in your sacred work, let your manner of speaking be rational, and your arguments and inferences just and strong; that you may effectually convince your hearers of the truth of what you deliver, in your ministrations of the gospel. And in your representation of things to the reason and understanding of men, it would sometimes be of special advantage to have some power over the fancy or imagination: this would help us to paint our themes in their proper colours, whether of the alluring or the forbidden kind. And now and then we should make use of both, in order to impress the idea on the soul with happier force and success.

When you would describe any of the personal or social virtues of life, so as to enforce their practice, set yourself to display the beauties and excellencies of them, in their own agreeable and lovely forms and colours. But do not content yourself with this alone: this is not sufficient to allure the degenerate and sensual mind of man to practise them. Few persons are of so happy a disposition, and so refined a genius, as to be wrought upon by the mere aspect of such inviting qualities. Endeavour therefore to illustrate the virtues by their contrary vices, and set forth these moral mischiefs both in their deformities and their dangerous consequences, before the eyes of your hearers. Think it not enough to represent to them, the shining excellencies of humility and benevolence, of justice, veracity, gratitude and temperance; but produce to sight the vile features of pride, envy, malice, spite, knavery, falsehood, revenge, sensuality, luxury, and the rest of that cursed train, in their proper places and seasons. Make it evident, how contrary they are both to the law of God and the

el of Christ; describe them in all their several forms, shapes, appearances; strip them of their false pretences and disgui- ; shew how they insinuate and exert themselves in different rrences of life, and different constitutions; and pursue them narrowly as it were with a hue and cry, with such exact riptions, that if any of these vices are indulged by your hear- they may be found out by strict self-examination, that the iciences of the guilty may be laid under conviction of sin, be set in the way of repentance and reformation.

Whensoever any vice has found the way into our bosoms, made its nest there, its proper and evil features and charac- had need to be marked out by the preacher with great accu- , that it may be discovered to our consciences in order to its truction: for these wretched hearts of ours are naturally so l of all their own inmates, that they are too ready to hide r ill qualities from our own sight and conviction, and thus cover and save them from the sentence of mortification and th, which is denounced against every sin in the word of God. l let the preacher and the hearer both remember, that sin must pursued to the death, or else there is no life to the soul. It is the christian, who *by the spirit mortifies the sinful deeds of body, has the promise of salvation and life;* Rom. viii. 13. would be a happy thing, if this vivacious and sprightly power he fancy, which too often becomes an ingenious and success- temper of the soul to guilt, mischief and ruin, might, by the of the preacher, be gained over to the interests of virtue and dness, and employed for God and salvation.

Think farther, that you should take some care also to engage memory, and to make it serve the purposes of religion. Let r reasonings be never so forcible and convincing, let your lan- ge be never so clear and intelligible, yet if the whole discourse le over the ears in a smooth and delightful stream, and if hing be fixed in the memory, the sermon is in great danger of ng lost and fruitless. Now to avoid this danger, I would ommend to you the care of a clear and distinct method, and this method appear to the hearers, by the division of your dis- rses into several plain and distinct particulars, so that the ole may not be a mere loose harangue, without evident mem- s and discernible rests and pauses. Whatsoever proper and ural divisions belong to your subject, mark them out by the mbers 1st, 2d, 3d, &c. This will afford you time to breathe the delivery of your discourse, and give your hearers a short son for recollection of the particulars which have been men- ned before.

But in this matter take care always to maintain a happy dium, so as never to arise to such a number of particulars, as y *make your sermon* look like a tree full of branches in the

winter, without the beautiful and profitable appearance of leaves and fruit. Cast the scheme of your discourse into some distinct general heads, and lesser subdivisions, in your first sketches and indiments of it: this will greatly assist you in the amplification, this will help you to preserve a just method throughout, and secure you from repeating the same thoughts too often: this will enable you to commit your sermon to your own memory the better, that you may deliver it with ease, and it will greatly assist the understanding as well as the memory of all that hear you. It will furnish them with matter and method for an easy recollection at home; for meditation in their devout retirement, and for religious conference or rehearsal after the public worship is ended.

Consider again, your business is with the consciences, and wills, and affections of men. A mere conviction of the reason and judgment, by the strongest arguments, is hardly sufficient, in matter of piety and virtue, to command the will into obedience; because the appetites of the flesh and the interests of this world are engaged on the opposite side. It is a very common case with the sons and daughters of Adam, to see and know their proper duty, and to have the reasons that enforce it fresh in their memory; and yet the powerful efforts of *the flesh and the world* withhold the will from the practice, forbid its holy resolutions for God and heaven, or keep them always feeble, doubtful and wavering. The God of nature therefore has furnished mankind with those powers, which we call passions, or affections of the heart, in order to excite the will with superior vigour and activity to avoid the evil and pursue the good. Upon this account the preacher must learn to address the passions in a proper manner, and I cannot but think it a very imperfect character of a christian preacher, that he reasons well upon every subject, and talks clearly upon his text, if he has nothing of the pathetic in his ministrations, no talent at all to strike the passions of the heart.

Awaken your spirit therefore in your composures, contrive all lively, forcible and penetrating forms of speech, to make your words powerful and impressive on the hearts of your hearers, when light is first let into the mind. Practise all the awful and solemn ways of address to the conscience, all the soft and tender influences on the heart. Try all methods to rouze and awaken the cold, the stupid, the sleepy race of sinners; learn all the language of holy jealousy and terror, to affright the presumptuous; all the compassionate and encouraging manners of speaking, to comfort, encourage and direct the awakened, the penitent, the willing and the humble; all the winning and engaging modes of discourse and expostulation, to constrain the hearers of every character to attend. Seek this happy skill of reigning and triumphing over the hearts of an assembly: persuade them

with power to love and practise all the important duties of godliness, in opposition to the flesh and the world; endeavour to kindle the soul to zeal in the holy warfare, and to make it bravely victorious over all the enemies of its salvation. But in all these efforts of sacred oratory, remember still you are a minister of the gospel of Christ: and as your style must not affect the pomp and magnificence of the theatre, so neither should you borrow your expressions or your metaphors, from the coarsest occupations, or any of the mean and uncleanly occurrences in life. Swell not the sound of your periods, with ambitious or pedantic phrases; dress not your serious discourses to the people in too glittering array, with an affectation of gaudy and flaunting ornaments, nor ever descend to so low a degree of familiarity and meanness, as to sink your language below the dignity of your subject, or your office.

IX. As the art of reasoning, and the happy skill of persuasion, are both necessary to be used in framing your discourses, so both of them may be borrowed in a good measure from the holy scriptures. The word of God will furnish you with a rich variety of forms, both to prove and persuade. Clear instruction, convincing argument, and pathetic address to the heart, may be all drawn from the sacred writers. Many fine strokes of true logic and rhetoric, are scattered through that divine book the bible: Words of force and elegance to charm and allure the soul, glitter and sparkle like golden ore in some peculiar parts of it. You may find there noble examples of the awful and compassionate style, and inimitable patterns of the terrible and the tender. Shall I therefore take the freedom, once again to call upon you to remember, that you are a minister of the word of God, a professor and preacher of the bible, and not a mere philosopher upon the foot of reason, nor an orator in a heathen school? I am not here directing you to compose your whole sermons of nothing else, but a perpetual connexion of texts of scripture; nor to spend the whole hour in running from one text to another, as a concordance, or the margin shall point them out. Persons of low degrees of learning, who give themselves up to this method, have frequently introduced scripture in their discourses, in a sense which the holy writers never thought of, and which the Spirit of God never designed: and yet if a learned man would happily explain the more difficult parts of the word of God, perhaps it will be generally best done, and especially in the pulpit, by comparing them with other texts, which are more plain and easy. Scripture is the best interpreter of itself.

As for argument to confirm a doctrine or enforce a duty, you may borrow much of this from the word of God. It is true, when we speak of those subjects which belong to natural religion,

we may very properly bring arguments from the nature of God and man, and from the reason of things, to shew how necessary and reasonable it is to believe such a truth, or to practise such a virtue; nor is the scripture itself barren of such reasonings, and even in the peculiar articles of christianity, it is a most excellent and useful design, now and then, to shew how consistent and harmonious they are with reason, and how worthy of our faith and practice, since the word of God has revealed them, though they could not be found out by the light of nature. Yet these arguments, if they are long and laboured, and not immediately apprehended by the mind, are much more proper to be communicated to the world by writing than by speaking: there the reader may review and dwell upon an argument till he has grasped the whole chain, and admits all the connected inferences, and sees the undoubted evidence of the conclusion: but reasonings in the pulpit for the most part should be short and easy, that they may strike conviction into the mind almost as soon as they strike the ear, unless your hearers were all men of learning and refined education.

But the bulk of our auditories, whether in the city or country, are not much profited, by sermons merely made up of rational proofs of any doctrine or duty, deeply and laboriously deduced from the original springs and prime nature of things. They do not find their minds so much enlightened, nor their hearts warmed by a tedious train of connected inferences, that are fetched from distant principles of nature and philosophy. This method, I confess, may entertain a few of the more rational, the more learned, or more polite persons in an auditory, who can survey and comprehend the sense of such discourses, and feel the force of such long chains of argumentation; and these persons, I own, ought to have due respect paid them in some parts of our ministry. Yet it is not the great business of a preacher of the gospel only to please the few, but *to become all things to all men*, and if possible, to win a multitude of souls to Christ. The generality of our hearers have their lives filled up with the business of their station, and have little leisure or advantage to improve their understandings in the art of deep reasoning. These will yawn and nod, and grow weary of the sermon; nor will such a preacher (though his discourses are never so much laboured) profit the assembly, any more than please them, if he goes on resolutely in this way: such a minister will quickly despise his hearers, and they will soon be tired with their preacher; and if some providence does not remove him to another congregation, or if he does not betake himself to some other business of life, he will be tempted to forsake the protestant dissenters, and throw himself into the established church, when he has persuaded his conscience to comply with the imposed terms of ministerial conformity.

ınt it is necessary to use good reason through your
ourse, and connect all the parts of it with justice; but
l before, let your arguments to prove any point be ge-
ort and easy, and within the grasp of a common under-
remember that a few plain and obvious reasonings,
iliar and well known principles, and some clear and
n texts of scripture, with a word or two to explain or
m to the understanding and conscience of men with
zeal, will impress the judgment and pierce the heart
e speedy and powerful conviction: and our hearers,
'd a plain scriptural argument as *the word of the living*
much more readily receive it, and submit much sooner
e and authority of it. *Thus saith the prophet*, or *thus*
ıpostle, carries greater weight with it, both to convince
'suade, than a long series of demonstrations from re-
ciples, though they should be firm and strong as those
or Sir Isaac Newton.

as for bright, warm and pathetic language, to strike
ıation or to affect the heart, to kindle the divine pas-
to melt the soul, there is none of the heathen orators
furnish you, than the moving expostulations of the
rophets, the tender and sprightly odes of holy David,
ectionate part of the letters of St. Paul, which even his
ı the church of Corinth confess to be powerful. The
/riters, among whom we number the Jews, were par-
amous for lively oratory, for bright images, and bold
ated figures of speech. Could I have heard Isaiah or
ronouncing some of their sermons, or attended St.
me of his pathetic strains of preaching, I should never
want of acquaintance with Tully or Demosthenes.

eacher whose mind is well stored and enriched with
sense and sentiments, the reasoning and the language
re, (and especially if these are wrought into his heart
ın experience) supposing his other talents are equal to
ıis brethren, will always have a considerable advantage
ı in composing such discourses, as shall be most popu-
nost useful in christian assemblies: and he may better
e presence and blessing of God, to make his word tri-
r the souls of men, and will generally speak to their
h more power for their eternal salvation. Shew me
r turned to God and holiness by the labours of a chris-
her, who is generally entertaining the audience with a
weighty chain of reasoning from the principles of nature,
ıing virtue in the language of heathen philosophy: and,
may undertake to shew you ten who have been con-
d converted, and have become holy persons and lively
by an attendance upon a scriptural, affectionate and

experimental ministry: the whole assembly hang attentive upon the lips of a man, who speaks to the heart as well as the understanding, and who can enforce his exhortations from a manifold experience of the success of them. They delight to hear the preacher, whose plain and powerful addresses to the conscience, and whose frequent methods of reasoning in the pulpit, have been drawn from what they themselves have read in scripture concerning God and man, sin and duty, our misery and divine mercy, death, resurrection, judgment, heaven and hell. They attend with holy reverence and affection on such a minister, whose frequent argument both in points of doctrine and practice is, *Thus saith the Lord.*

X. *Be not slothful* or negligent in your weekly preparation for the pulpit: take due time for it: begin so early in the week, that you may have time enough before you to finish your preparations well; and always allow for accidental occurrences, either from indisposition of body, from interruptions by company, from unforeseen business or trouble, &c. that you may not be reduced to the necessity of hurrying over your work in haste at the end of the week, and serving God and the souls of men with poor, cold and careless performances. Remember that awful word, though spoken on another occasion, Jer. xlvii. 10. *Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord deceitfully.* Manage so as to leave generally the Saturday evening, or at least the Lord's-day morning, entire for the review and correction of your discourse, and for your own spiritual improvement by the sermon which you have prepared for the people.

If it should happen that the mere providence of God, without any neglect of yours, has hindered you from making so good a preparation as you designed, you may with courage, and hope of divine assistance, venture into the assembly with more slender and imperfect furniture: but if your conscience tells you that your preparations are very slight, and the neglect is all your own, you have less reason to expect aids from above without great humiliation for your negligence. And what if God should forsake you so far in the pulpit, as to expose you to public shame, and thus punish you for your carelessness in the midst of the congregation?

Study your matter well by meditation and reading, and comparing scriptures together, till you have gotten it completely within your grasp and survey: then if you should happen to be so situated in preaching, that you could not refresh your memory by the inspection of your paper every minute, yet you will not be exposed to hurry and confusion; a ready thought will suggest something pertinent to your purpose. Let your preparations be usually so perfect, that you may be able to fill up the time allotted for the discourse with solid sense and proper language,

even if your natural spirits should happen to be heavy and indisposed at the hour of preaching, and if your mind should have no new thoughts arising in the delivery of your discourse. Labour carefully in the formation of your sermons in younger years: a habit of thinking and speaking well, procured by the studies of youth, will make the labour of your middle age easy, when, perhaps, you will have much less time and leisure. This shall suffice for the second general head, which exhorts you to take heed to your private studies, both those which may furnish you for the work of the ministry in general, and those which are necessary to your particular preparations for the pulpit.

Sect. III.—*Of public Ministrations.*

We proceed now to the third general head, and that is, Take heed to your public labours and ministrations in the church; which may be done, by attending to the following particulars:

I. Apply yourself to your work with pious delight; not as a toil and task, which you wish were done and ended, but as matter of inward pleasure to your own soul: enter the pulpit with the solemnity of holy joy, that you have an opportunity to speak for the honour of God, and the salvation of men. Then you will not preach or pray with sloth or laziness, with coldness or indifference: we do not use to be slothful and indifferent in the pursuit of our joys, or the relish of our chosen pleasures. Stir up yourself to the work with sacred vigour, that the assembly may feel what you speak. But if you deliver the most solemn and lively composures like a man that is half asleep, it will be no wonder if your hearers slumber. A dull preacher makes a drowsy church.

II. Endeavour to get your heart into a temper of divine love, zealous for the laws of God, affected with the grace of Christ, and compassionate for the souls of men. With this temper engage in public work. Let your frame of spirit be holy with regard to your own inward devotion, near to God, and delighting in him: and let it be zealous for the name of Christ, and the increase of his kingdom. O pity perishing sinners when you are sent to invite them to be reconciled to God. Let not self be the subject or the end of your preaching, but Christ and the salvation of souls. *We preach not ourselves*, saith the apostle, *but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake;* 2 Cor. iv. 5. Speak as a dying preacher to dying hearers, with the utmost *compassion to the ignorant*, the tempted, the foolish, and the obstinate; for all these are in danger of eternal death. Attend your work with the utmost desire to save souls from hell, and enlarge the kingdom of Christ your Lord. Go into the public assembly with a design (if God please) to

strike and persuade some souls there into repentance, faith, holiness and salvation. Go to *open blind eyes, to unstop deaf ears, to make the lame walk,* to make the foolish wise, *to raise those that are dead in trespasses and sins* to a heavenly and divine life, and to bring guilty rebels to return to the love and obedience of their Maker, by Jesus Christ, the great Reconciler, that they may be pardoned and saved. Go to diffuse the favour of the name of Christ and his gospel, through a whole assembly, and to allure souls to partake of his grace and glory.

III. Go forth in *the strength of Christ,* for these glorious effects are above your own strength, and transcend all the powers of the brightest preachers. *Be strong in the grace which is in Christ Jesus;* 2 Tim. ii. 1. *Without him we can do nothing;* John xv. 5. Go with a design to work wonders of salvation on sinful creatures, but in the strength of Jesus, *who hath all power given him in heaven and earth, and hath promised to be with his ministers to the end of the world;* Mat. xxviii. 20. Pray earnestly for the promised aids of the Spirit, and plead with God who hath sent you forth in the service of the gospel of his Son, that you may not return empty, but bring in a fair harvest of converts to heaven.. It is *the Lord of the harvest* who only can give this divine success to the labourers. *He that planteth is nothing, and he that watereth is nothing, but all our hope is in God who giveth the increase;* 1 Cor. iii. 7.

IV. Get the substance of your sermon which you have prepared for the pulpit, so wrought into your head and heart by review and meditation, that you may have it at command, and speak to your hearers with freedom; not as if you were reading or repeating your lesson to them, but as a man sent to teach and persuade them to faith and holiness. Deliver your discourses to the people like a man that is talking to them in good earnest about their most important concerns, and their everlasting welfare; like a messenger sent from heaven who would fain save sinners from hell, and allure souls to God and happiness. Do not indulge that lazy way of reading over your prepared paper, as a school-boy does an oration out of Livy or Cicero, who has no concern in the things he speaks. But let all the warmest zeal for God, and compassion for perishing men, animate your voice and countenance; and let the people see and feel, as well as hear, that you are speaking to them about things of infinite moment, and in which your own eternal interest lies as well as theirs.

V. If you pray and hope for the assistance of the Spirit of God in every part of your work, do not resolve always to confine yourself precisely to the mere words and sentences which you have written down in your private preparations. Far be it from me to encourage a preacher to venture into public work without due preparation by study, and a regular composure of his dis-

ourse. We must not *serve God with what cost us nothing*. All ur wisest thoughts and cares are due to the sacred service of the emple; but what I mean is, that we should not impose upon urselves just such a number of pre-composed words and lines to e delivered in the hour, without daring to speak a warm senti- ent that comes fresh upon the mind. Why may you not hope or some lively turns of thoughts, some new pious sentiments hich may strike light, and heat, and life into the understand- ngs and the hearts of those that hear you? In the zeal of your inistrations, why may you not expect some bright and warm nd pathetic forms of argument and persuasion to offer them- elves to your lips, for the more powerful conviction of sinners, nd the encouragement and comfort of humble christians? Have ou not often found such an enlargement of thought, such a ariety of sentiment and freedom of speech, in common conver- ation upon an important subject, beyond what you are apprized f before-hand? And why should you forbid yourself this na- ural advantage in the pulpit, and in the fervour of sacred inistrations, where also you have more reason to hope for livine assistance?

Besides, for us who are protestant dissenters, and confine ourselves to no set forms in prayer, it seems more unreasonable o confine our lips constantly and precisely to the words written n our papers in the work of preaching. Do we plead so ear- estly for the liberty of prayer, and yet never give our spirits a iberty to express their present warm, lively and affectionate houghts, in ministring the gospel of Christ under the hopes of is assistance! Why must we never dare to add any thing to our premeditated notes in speaking to the people, while we take his freedom in speaking to the blessed God? As there has been many a fervent and devout petition offered to God in our ad- dresses to him, which has not been thought of before; so many r sentence that was never written, has been delivered in our ad- dresses to the people with glorious success; it has come more im- mediate and warm from the heart, and may have been blessed of God to save a soul.

VI. Here would be a proper place to interpose a few direc- tions concerning elocution, and the whole manner of delivery of your discourse to the people; which includes both a voice, gesture and behaviour suited to the subject and design of every part of the sermon. But the rules that are necessary for this part of our work, are much better derived from books written on this subject, from an observation of the best preachers, in order to imitate them, and an avoidance of that which we find offensive when we ourselves are hearers. Besides, as I have had an opportunity sometimes, my dear brother, of attending your performances in public, I think I may be bold to say, that in this as well as in several other parts of your ministration, you stand in no need of

any advice I can give. But since you have called me at present to this service, I have endeavoured to fulfil it. If I had a design to go through the whole of the ministerial office, I should here also find a proper place to speak of the manner of your performance of public prayer, of your direction of the person who leads that part of worship which is called psalmody, and in your ministration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's-supper; but this would require much more time, and my chief design was to put you in mind of a few useful things which relate to preaching. I proceed therefore to the last particular.

VII. Be very solicitous about the success of all your labours in the pulpit. Water the seed sown not only with public, but secret prayer. Plead with God importunately, that he would not suffer you to labour in vain. Be not like that foolish bird *the Ostrich, which lays her eggs in the dust, and leaves them there, regardless whether they come to life or not: God hath not given her understanding;* Job xxxix. 14—17. But let not this folly be your character or practice: labour, and watch, and pray, that your sermons and the fruit of your studies may become words of divine life to souls.

It is an observation of pious Mr. Baxter's, which I have read somewhere in his works, that he has never known any considerable success from the brightest and noblest talents, nor the most excellent kind of preaching; and that even where the preachers themselves have been truly religious, if they have not had a solicitous concern for the success of their ministrations.—Let the awful and important thoughts of souls being saved by my preaching, or left to perish and be condemned to hell by my negligence, I say, let this awful and tremendous thought dwell ever upon your spirit. We are made *watchmen to the house of Israel, as Ezekiel was;* Ezek. iii. 17, &c. *and if we give no warning of approaching danger, the souls of* multitudes may perish through our neglect, *but the blood of souls will* be terribly *required at our hands.*

Sect. IV.—*Of the Conversation of a Minister.*

We are come now to the fourth and last thing which I proposed, in order to the fulfilling of your ministry, viz. Take heed to your whole conversation in the world; let that be managed not only as becomes a professor of christianity, but as becomes a minister of the gospel of Christ. Now amongst other rules which may render your conversation agreeable to your character, I entreat you to take these few into your thoughts:

I. Let it be blameless and inoffensive. *Be vigilant, be temperate in all things, not only as a soldier of Christ,* but as an under-leader of part of his army. *Be temperate,* and abstain sometimes even from lawful delights, that you may make the work of self-denial easy, and that you may *bear hardship as be-*

comes a soldier; 2 Tim. ii. 3, 4. *Be watchful* or vigilant, lest you be too much entangled with the affairs of this life, *that you may better please him who has chosen you* for an officer in his battalions, and that you may not be easily surprised into the snares of sin. Guard against a love of pleasure, a sensual temper, an indulgence of appetite, an excessive relish of wine or dainties; this carnalizes the soul, and gives occasion to the world to reproach us but too justly.

Watch carefully in all your conduct, *that you give no offence*, as far as possible, *neither to Jew or Gentile, nor to the church of God, that so the ministry may not be blamed;* 1 Cor. x. 32, 2 Cor. vi. 3. Maintain a holy jealousy over yourself and your conduct, *that the name of Christ and his gospel* suffer not the reproach of tongues and impious blasphemies through your means. Oh how dreadful is the mischief that a scandalous minister does to the gospel of our blessed Lord! What a fearful train of consequences may attend his indulgence of any sinful appetite, or any single criminal action, even though it be not repeated! What a fatal stumbling-block does he lay before the feet of saints and sinners! He turns away the heart of sinners from God and religion, who perhaps began to think of setting their faces towards heaven; he discourages the hearts of young christians, and weakens the hands of all the friends of Christ.—*Woe be to the preacher by whom such offences come.*

II. Let your conversation be exemplary in all the duties of holiness and virtue, in all the instances of worship and piety toward God, and in those of justice, honour, and hearty benevolence towards men. Be forward and ready to engage in every good word and work, that you may be a pattern and a leader of the flock, that you may be able to address the people committed to your care in the language of the blessed apostle, *Be ye followers of me even as I also am of Christ;* 1 Cor. xi. 1. *Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an example.——For our conversation is in heaven;* Phil. iii. 17, 20. *Those things which ye have both learned and received, and heard and seen in me, do you practise, and the God of peace shall be with you;* Phil. iv. 9.

III. Let your conversation be grave and manly, yet pleasant and engaging. Let it be grave, manly, and venerable: remember your station in the church, that you sink not into levity and vain trifling, that you indulge not any ridiculous humours or childish follies, below the dignity of your character: keep up the honour of your office among men by a remarkable sanctity of manners, by a decent and manly deportment. Remember that our station does not permit any of us to set up for a buffoon; nor will it be any glory to us to excel in farce and comedy. Let others obtain the honour of being good jesters, and of have

ing it in their power to spread a laugh round the company when they please: but let it be our ambition to act on the stage of life as men who are devoted to the service of the God of heaven, to the real benefit of mankind on earth, and to their eternal interests.

Yet there is no need that your behaviour should have any thing stiff or haughty, any thing sullen or gloomy in it: there is an art of pleasing in conversation that will maintain the honour of a superior office without a morose silence, without an affected stiffness, and without a haughty superiority. A pleasant story may proceed without offence from a minister's lips; but he should never aim at the title of a man of mirth, nor abound in such tales as carry no useful instruction in them, no lessons of piety, or wisdom, or virtue. Let a chearful freedom, a generous friendship, and an innocent pleasure generally appear on your countenance; and let your speech be ever kind and affectionate. Do not put on any forbidding airs, nor let the humblest soul be afraid to speak to you. Let your whole carriage be civil and affable; let your address to men be usually open and free, such as may allure persons to be open and free with you in the important concerns of their souls. Seek as far as possible to obtain all your pious designs, by soft and gentle methods of persuasion.

If you are ever called to the unpleasing and painful work of reproof, this may be done effectually upon some occasions without speaking a word. When vicious, or uncleanly, or unbecoming speeches arise in public conversation, a sudden silence with an assumed gravity will often be a sensible and sufficient reproof. Or where words of admonition may not be proper because of the company, sometimes a sudden departure may be the best way to acquaint them with your disapprobation. But there are cases wherein such a tacit rebuke is not sufficient to answer your character and your office. Sometimes it is necessary for a minister to bear a public and express witness against shocking immorality, or against vile and impious discourse. Yet in general it must be said, *if a reproof can be given in secret*, it is best, and most likely to prevail upon the offender, because it less irritates his passions, nor awakens his pride to vindicate himself, and to despise all reproof.

Whensoever providence calls you to this work, make it appear to the transgressor that you do it with regret and pain: let him see that you are not giving vent to your own wrath, but seeking his interest and welfare; and that were it not for the honour of God, and for his good, you would gladly excuse yourself from the ungrateful task; and that it is a work in which your spirit takes no delight. If the case and circumstances require some speeches that are awful and severe, let it appear still that

ove and pity are the prevailing passions, and that even nger has something divine and holy in it, as being raised inted against the sin rather than against the sinner. Study e the whole of your carriage and discourse amongst men aging, as may invite strangers to love you, and allure them religion for your sake.

V. In order to attain the same end, let your conversation nded with much self-denial and meekness: avoid the cha- of a humourist, nor be unreasonably fond of little things, evish for the want of them. Suppress rising passion early. are providentially led into argument and dispute, whether mes of belief or practice, be very watchful lest you run erce contention, into angry and noisy debate. Guard t every word that savours of malice, or of bitter strife: against the first stirrings of sudden wrath or resentment: ith patience the contradiction of others, and *forbear to railing for railing. A minister must be gentle, and not trive, but meekly instructing gainsayers.* He should ne- ready either to give or take offence, but he should teach ople to neglect and bury resentment, to be deaf to re- es, and to forgive injuries, by his own example, *even as as forgiven all of us.* Let us imitate his divine pattern ncels and forgives our infinite offences *for the sake of Christ. A bishop must not be a brawler or a striker;* iii. 3. but such as the apostle was, *gentle among the peo- en as a nurse cherishes her children; and being affection- esirous of their welfare, we should be willing to impart ly the gospel of God to them,* but any thing that is dear for the salvation of their souls; 1 Thess. ii. 7, 8.

ever suffer any differences (if possible) to arise between d any of the people who are committed to your care, or on your ministrations: this will endanger the success of est labours among them, and for this reason, though you milies with freedom, yet avoid all unnecessary enquiries eir domestic affairs by a prying curiosity; the pleasure of ecrets will never pay for the danger that attends them, and wn business is sufficient for you. Avoid entering into any little private and personal quarrels that may arise among unless providence give you an evident call to become *a maker:* but even in this blessed work there is some dan- disobliging one side or the other; for though both sides en to blame, yet each supposes himself so much in the that your softest and most candid intimation of their being le, even in little things, will sometimes awaken the jea- of one or both parties against you; this will tend to abate steem of you, and give a coldness to their attention on

your stated services. We had need be *wise as serpents in this case, and harmless as doves*; Mat. x. 16.

V. Let your conversation be as fruitful and edifying as your station and opportunities will allow. Wheresoever you come, endeavour (if possible) that the world may be the better for you. If it be the duty of every christian, much more is it the indispensible duty of a minister of Christ, to take heed that *no corrupt communication proceed out of his mouth, but that which is good for edification, that it may minister grace to the hearers*; Eph. iv. 29. In your private visits to the members of your flocks, or to the houses of those who attend on your ministry, depart not (if possible) without putting in some word for God and religion, for Christ and his gospel: take occasion from common occurrences that arise, artfully and insensibly to introduce some discourse of things sacred. Let it be done with prudence and holy skill, that the company may be led into it ere they are aware. The ingenious Mr. Norris's Little Discourse of Religious Conversation, and Mr. Matthew Henry's Sermon of Friendly Visits, have many excellent and valuable hints in them for our use.

It is to be confessed, that the best of ministers and christians sometimes fall into such company, that it is hardly possible to speak a word for God and the gospel among them. Try then whether you cannot lead the discourse to some useful theme in matters of science, art and ingenuity, or to rules of prudence, morality, or human conduct. *There is a time of keeping silence, and restraining our lips as with a bridle, even from every thing that is piously good, while some sort of wicked men stand before us*; Psal. xxxix. 1, 2. The best men are sometimes *dumb with silence*, and dare not speak of God or religion, lest they should *cast their pearls before swine, and give their holy things to dogs*, and lest they should provoke the unclean or the envious animals to foam out their impurities, or to *turn again and rend them*. But I doubt this caution has been carried much farther by our own cowardice and carnality of spirit, than David ever practised in the xxxixth Psalm, or than Jesus Christ meant it in the [illegible] of Matthew. Let us take heed then that we abuse not this [illegible] caution to a manifest neglect of our duty, and to withhold our lips from the things of God, where providence gives [illegible] opportunity to speak of them.

[illegible] and then take occasion to speak a kind and religious [illegible] children of the household; put them in mind of avoiding [illegible] childish folly, or of practising some duty that belongs [illegible] Let your memory be well furnished with the words [illegible] to the several ages of mankind, as well as [illegible] of life, that *out of the abundance of the* [illegible] speak to the advantage of all that hear you,

and particularly improve the younger parts of mankind, who are the hopes of the next generation. Make the lambs of the flock love you, and hear your voice with delight, that they may grow up under your instruction to fill up the room of their fathers when they are called away to heaven: nor let servants be utterly neglected, where providence may afford you an opportunity to speak a word to their souls.

Learn what are the spiritual circumstances of the families whom you visit, and address them with a word in season where you can have proper opportunity. Converse personally with them (if you can) about their eternal concerns. Let the ease and gentleness of your addresses to them, in a natural and familiar way, take off all that shy and bashful tincture from their minds, that is ready to prevent their uttering a word about the concern of their souls. Enquire tenderly into their state with regard to God: draw sinners by words of compassion to repent of their crimes, to return to God, and to trust in Jesus the Saviour. Teach christians sincerely to love and practise duty, and to endure with honour the trials of life. Teach them to be sick and die as becomes the disciples of Christ. Treasure up your own experiences of divine things, not only as matters of delightful review in your own retirements, and for the encouragement of your own hope, but as lessons to be taught your people upon all proper occasions. *Whether you are afflicted, or whether you are comforted, let it be for their consolation and salvation*; 2 Cor. i. 6.

A minister, whose business and known employment is to speak of the things of God, should never be ashamed to impart divine knowledge, or to exhort to holiness with his lips, and to preach the word of the gospel of grace, whether the world calls it *in season or out of season*; 2 Tim. iv. 1. He that has the happy talent of parlour preaching, has sometimes done more for Christ and souls in the space of a few minutes, than by the labour of many hours and days in the usual course of preaching in the pulpit. Our character should be all of a piece, and we should help forward the success of our public ministrations by our private addresses to the hearts and consciences of men, where providence favours us with just occasions.

In order to promote this work of particular watchfulness over the flock of Christ, where he has made you a shepherd and overseer, it is useful to keep a catalogue of their names, and now and then review them with a pastoral eye and affection. This will awaken and incline you to lift up proper petitions for each of them, so far as you are acquainted with their circumstances in body or mind, This will excite you to give thanks to God on account of those who *walk as becomes the gospel*, and who have

either begun, or proceeded and increased in the christian life and temper by your ministry: you will observe the names of the negligent and backsliding christians, to mourn over them, and admonish them: you will be put in mind how to dispose of your time in christian visits, and learn the better to fulfil your whole ministry among them.

I shall enlarge no further in the enumeration of our duties, which would easily swell into a volume, if they were set before our eyes in their full extent: but in general, I say, these are the methods whereby we must take heed to ourselves, if we would fulfil the ministry that we have received of Christ. To supply what I have omitted, read frequently, and with holy attention, the epistles of Paul to Timothy and Titus, which will furnish you richly with directions for your work: and I would recommend to you the examples of St. Paul and Timothy, as they are put well together in a little book by the Reverend Mr. Murray, which was printed but a few years ago. And as the account of the lives of many ancient ministers may furnish us with patterns for our imitation, so the life of the late venerable Dr. Cotton Mather, of New England, has many excellent hints in it for this purpose; Chap. ii. Sect. 1. and Chap. vi.

SECT. V.—*A solemn Enforcement of these Exhortations on the Conscience.*

The things which I have spoken hitherto, have been a display of the best methods I can think of, for the execution of the sacred office of the ministry: and so far as they are conformable to the word of God, we may venture to say these are your duties, my dear brother, and these are ours. It remains now to be considered, in what manner shall we enforce them on our own consciences, and on yours? What solemn obtestations shall I use to press these momentous concerns on all our hearts? What pathetic language shall I chuse, what words of awful efficacy and divine fervour, which may first melt our spirits into softness, and then imprint these duties upon them with lasting power? We exhort and charge you, we exhort and charge ourselves, by all that is serious and sacred, by all that is important and everlasting, by all the solemn transactions between God and man which are past, and by all the more solemn and awful scenes which are yet to come, by all things in our holy religion which are dreadful and tremendous, and by all things in this gospel which are glorious and amiable, heavenly and divine; we charge you by all that is written in this book of God, according to which we shall be judged in the last day, by all the infinite and astonishing glories and terrors of an invisible world and an unseen eternity, we charge and exhort you, we exhort and charge ourselves, that we all *take heed* to the ministry which *we have* [illegible] the Lord,

esus that we fulfil it. But let us descend to more particular rms of solemn exhortation, which perhaps may strike our consciences in a more sensible manner, and print the duties deeper pon our hearts.

First then, we exhort and charge you, we charge and exort our own souls, by all the ancient transactions between God ie Father and his Son Jesus Christ, for the salvation of sinful ien, by all the eternal counsels of peace that passed between iem to recover lost mankind to the favour and image of his laker, that we preach this gospel with faithfulness, and be istant in the sacred work. It is the effect of these divine counels that we publish to sinners; it is the merciful product of this acred covenant of redemption that we are sent to proclaim to lost world: this is the gospel that is put into our hands: God rant we may speak as becomes creatures entrusted with messages of such a heavenly original, with affairs of such divine olemnity.

Secondly, We exhort and charge you, and we would charge urselves to fulfil our ministry, by the invaluable treasure of this gospel which is put into our hands, by that word of life which is ommitted to our ministration. *Let us speak* with such a serious eal *as becomes the oracles of God* and the embassies of his mercy, vith such compassion to dying souls as is manifested in this gospel of love, with such inward fervour and holy solicitude for the uccess of our labours, that if it were possible not the soul of one inner within the reach of our preaching might miss of this parloning mercy and eternal joy. Oh let us not dare to trifle with God or men: let us not dare be cold and lifeless in pronouncng the words of everlasting life, nor lazy and indolent in carying these errands of divine love to a lost and perishing world.

Thirdly, We charge and beseech you, and we charge ourselves, *by the mercies of the living God,* which we hope both you and we have tasted, *by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,* which we hope we have felt and received, that you and we proclaim these mercies with a sacred zeal, and that in the name of God and of our Lord Jesus, we offer them to a miserable world with holy importunity. If ever we have known this wondrous compassion of God to ourselves, if ever we *have tasted that the Lord is gracious,* let us remember the relish we have had of this infinite compassion and condescending grace, when we were perishing under the power and guilt of sin; and with an imitation of that divine piety, let us entreat sinners to be saved. Let us remember all the alluring charms, the heavenly sweetnesses of forgiving, sanctifying and saving grace; and do [illegible]most to set them all before sinners in the most inviting [illegible] we may win sinful men to accept of the same salvation.

[illegible], We exhort and charge you, and we charge our-

selves, by the dear and glorious *name of* our blessed *Jesus, whose servants we are*, whose name we bear, whose authority gives us commission, and who hath chosen us to be the ministers of his grace, the messengers of his dying love to the sons of men; we charge and beseech you to take care of the honour of his name in your ministrations, for we are sent forth to display before the eyes of the world, the unsearchable riches of Christ: we are entrusted to spread abroad the honour of his name; O let us labour and strive that our zeal bear some proportion to the dignity of our trust, and let us take heed that we do nothing unworthy of our great and glorious Master in heaven, who dwells *at the right hand of God*; nothing unworthy of that holy and illustrious name, in which we are sent forth to preach this gospel, and to enlarge his kingdom. He has set us up as lights upon a hill in this sinful world, this benighted part of his dominion; let us burn and shine to his honour. He has assumed and placed us as stars in his right-hand, let us shine and burn gloriously, that we may give light to a midnight world. O that we may point out to them *the morning star*, that we may bring them under the beams of the rising *sun of righteousness*, and guide them in the way to the hills of paradise and everlasting joy!

Fifthly, We beseech and charge you, while we charge ourselves, by the inestimable value of *the blood of Christ* which purchased this salvation, that you and we display this illustrious and costly purchase to sinful perishing creatures; this precious blood, which is sufficient to redeem a world from death, and which is the price of all our infinite and everlasting blessings, demands that we publish and offer them in his name, with holy zeal and solicitude to sinful men. Oh may our hearts and our lips join to proclaim this redemption, this salvation, these everlasting blessings, with such a devout and sacred passion as becomes the divine price that was paid for them! Let us not be found triflers with the blood of Christ, nor let us bring cold hearts and dead affections, when we come to set before sinners, the rich and inestimable stream of that life and blood, that comes warm from the heart of the dying Son of God. Let perishing creatures know that it cost the Prince of Glory such a dreadful price as this to redeem them from eternal misery; and at the same time let our own spirits feel the powerful workings of gratitude to the divine friend, that bled and died for us, and let our language make it appear that we speak what we feel.

Sixthly, We entreat you with all tenderness, and with holy solemnity and fear, we charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the invaluable worth of perishing souls, that we fulfil all our ministry with a concern of heart equal to so important a case. How can we dare to speak with lifeless lips, with cold language, or a careless air, when we are sent to recover immortal souls

from the brink of everlasting death? Oh let it never be said, that such or such a soul was lost for ever through our carelessness, through our coldness, through our sinful sloth in publishing the offers of recovering grace! How tremendous and painful will such a thought be to our hearts! How dreadful the anguish of it to the awakened conscience of a drowsy preacher!

Seventhly, We charge you solemnly, and we charge ourselves, by the honour that Christ has done to us in times past, and has done to you this day, by the dignity of that office with which we have been formerly invested, and which you have this day received, that neither you nor we do any thing unbecoming this honourable character. Does Jesus the divine Shepherd appoint us under-shepherds of his flock? Are we constituted *stewards* in his house, to dispense the mysteries of his grace, and the good things of his gospel; are we the *messengers* of our risen Lord to a dying world; are we the *ministers* of our exalted Saviour in his kingdom here below; are we the *stars in his right-hand*; are we the earthly *angels in his churches*? O let us take heed that we do nothing to disgrace the titles of dignity and honour which he has put upon us in his word: let us remember that every dignity brings an equal duty with it; and by fulfilling the various and difficult duties of our holy station, let us make it appear that our office was not conferred upon us in vain. It behoves us well to remember that a blemish upon the name of a minister, arising from his own criminal conduct, brings a foul and lasting scandal upon the office itself, and upon the gospel of our glorified Lord, in whose name we act; and he will not fail to resent it.

Eighthly, We exhort and charge you therefore, my dear brother, by all the sacred solemnities of this day, by the vows of God which you have this day taken upon yourself, and *the bond wherewith you have bound your soul*; and we would each of us charge our own consciences, by our own former solemn vows, that neither you nor we ever suffer ourselves to forget or disregard our holy and powerful engagements; that we be awake at all times to fulfil our work, and that we never indulge low and trifling thoughts of what has formerly appeared to us, and what this day appears to you of such awful importance. Oh let us ever refresh upon our spirits the serious and important transactions of that day, wherein we gave up ourselves to Christ, in the sacred service of his church. Let us often review the vows of these remarkable seasons of our life, and renew and confirm them before the Lord.

Ninthly, We charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the decaying interest of religion, and the withering state of christianity at this day, that we do not increase this general and lamentable decay, this growing and dreadful apostacy, by our sloth

and careless management of the trust which is committed to us. It is a divine interest indeed, but declining; it is a heavenly cause, but among us it is sinking and dying. O let us stir up our hearts, and all that is within us, and strive mightily in prayer and in preaching to revive the work of God, and beg earnestly that God, by a fresh and abundant effusion of his own Spirit, would *revive his own work* among us! *Revive thy own work, O Lord, in the midst of these years* of sin and degeneracy, nor let us labour in vain. *Where is thy zeal, O Lord, and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and thy mercies? Are they restrained?* O let us rouse our souls with all holy fervour to fulfil our ministry, for it will be a dreadful reproach upon us, and a burthen too heavy for us to bear, if we let the cause of Christ and godliness die under our hands for want of a lively zeal, and pious fervour and faithfulness in our ministrations.

Tenthly, We entreat, we exhort and charge you, and we charge ourselves, by the solemn and awful circumstances of a dying bed, and the thoughts of conscience in that important hour, when we shall enter into the world of spirits, that we take heed to the ministry which we have received: surely that hour is hastening upon us, when our heads will lie upon a dying pillow. When a few more mornings and evenings have visited our windows, the shadows of a long night will begin to spread themselves over us: in that gloomy hour, conscience will review the behaviour of the days that are past, will take account of the conduct of our whole lives, and will particularly examine our labours and cares in our sacred office. Oh may we ever dread the thoughts of making bitter work for repentance in that hour, and of treasuring up terrors for a death-bed by a careless and useless ministry!

Eleventhly, We exhort and charge you, and we charge ourselves, *by our gathering together* before the throne of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the solemn account we must there give of the ministry with which he hath entrusted us, that we prepare by our present zeal and labour to render that most awful scene peaceful to our souls, and the issue of it joyful and happy. Let us look forward to that illustrious and tremendous appearance, when our *Lord shall come with ten thousands of his* holy angels to enquire into the conduct of men, and particularly of the ministers of his kingdom here on earth. Let us remember that we shall be examined in the light of the flames of that day? What we have done with his gospel which he gave us to preach? What we have done with his promises of rich salvation, which he sent us to offer in his name? What is become of the souls committed to our care? O that we may *give up our account with joy, and not with grief*, to the Judge of the living and the dead, in that glorious, that dreadful and decisive hour!

Twelfthly, We charge and warn you, my dear brother, and we warn and charge ourselves, by all the terrors written in this divine book, and by all the indignation and vengeance of God, which we are sent to display before a sinful world; by all the torments and agonies of hell, which we are commissioned to denounce against impenitent sinners, in order to persuade men to turn to God and receive and obey the gospel, that we take heed to our ministry that we fulfil it. This vengeance and these terrors will fall upon our souls, and that with intolerable weight, with double and immortal anguish, if we have trifled with these terrible solemnities, and made no use of these awful scenes to awaken men to lay hold of the offered grace of the gospel. *Knowing therefore the terrors of the Lord, let us persuade men, for we must all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ, to receive according to our work*; 2 Cor. v. 10, 11.

In the last place, We entreat, we exhort and charge you, by all the joys of paradise, and the blessings of an eternal heaven, which are our hope and support under all our labours, and which in the name of Christ we offer to sinful perishing men, and invite them to partake thereof: Can we speak of such joys and glories with a sleepy heart and indolent language? Can we invite sinners who are running headlong into hell, to return and partake of these felicities, and not be excited to the warmest forms of address, and the most lively and engaging methods of persuasion? What scenes of brightness and delight can animate the lips and language of an orator, if the glories and the joys of the christian heaven and our immortal hopes cannot do it? We charge and entreat you therefore, and we charge ourselves, by the shining recompences which are promised to faithful ministers, that we keep this glory ever in view, and awaken our dying zeal in our sacred work. *There is a crown of righteousness laid up for those who have fought the good fight, who have finished their course, who have kept the faith*; 2 Tim. iv. 7. There is *a glory which is to be revealed, a crown of glory which fadeth not away*, prepared for every under-shepherd who shall feed the flock of God under his care, and be found faithful in his work: *when the great Shepherd shall appear*, he himself will bestow it upon them. O let us look up continually to this immortal crown! Let us shake off our sluggishness, and rouse all our active powers at the prospect of this felicity. Let us labour and strive with all our might, that we may become possessors of this bright reward.

Before we conclude this exhortation, let us try to enforce it still with more power, by considering in whose presence are these solemnities transacted, and these charges given. We exhort and charge you then, in the presence of this church, who hath called you to minister to them in holy things, and who give up

their souls this day to your care, to your instructions, to your conduct in the mistrations of the gospel. We charge and exhort you that you *take the over-sight of them* with all humility and diligence, and sacred delight, that you make the life of their souls your perpetual care, that none of them may be lost through your default.

We exhort and charge you in the presence of this whole assembly, who are met together to behold and hear *our faith and order in the gospel.* They are witnesses of the solemn obligations you have this day laid yourself under, and will be called as witnesses against you in the day of Christ, if you take no care to perform your sacred vows. We exhort and charge you, in the presence of the holy and elect angels, who are continually waiting in their ministry on the saints in the church, and viewing with delight the ministration of the gospel of Christ, their Lord and ours, as it is managed by the hand of men. They see, they hear, and they will bear record against you; a dreadful record of broken vows and faithless promises, if you are found careless and unfaithful.

Forgive me, dear brother, forgive the solemn language of these exhortations; we hope, we believe, we are persuaded your heart is right with God, and you will be found faithful in that day, and that men and angels will be witnesses of your zeal and your labours in the sacred work. But we also feel so much coldness in our own spirits, that we have need to address you and ourselves in most solemn and awful language.

We charge you then finally in the presence of God, the great God, the all-knowing and almighty, the universal Governor and Judge, and our Lord Jesus Christ, to whom he hath committed all judgment, *who hath eyes as a flame of fire* to see through our hearts and souls; we charge you, and we charge ourselves, under the all-seeing eye of the great God and of his Son Jesus our Lord, that with holy care and diligence both we and you fulfil the work of our ministry with which Christ hath intrusted us, that we may approve ourselves to him in zeal and faithfulness and love; in zeal for his honour and his gospel, in faithfulness to our sacred commission, and in love and pity to the souls of men. If sinners will continue obstinate and impenitent, after all our pious cares, labours and prayers, their blood will not lie at our door; *our work is* left *with the Lord, and our judgment and* reward *with our God;* Isa. xlix. 4. But if it be possible, we should with utmost earnestness and compassion seize the souls of sinners who are on the very borders of hell, we should *pluck them like brands out of the fire,* and save them from burning; Jude ver. 23.

O may the spirit of the blessed God favour us with his divine aids, that we may bring home many wanderers to the fold

of Christ the great Shepherd; that we may rescue many souls from death, who may be *our joy and crown and glory in the day of the Lord Jesus!* May this be your happiness, my dear brother; may this be mine! May this be the happiness of every one of us who minister in holy things, through the abounding grace of Christ and the influences of his Spirit; and may it be the happiness of all who in different places attend our constant holy ministrations, and particularly of all that hear us this day, to stand and appear with us before the judgment-seat of Christ with mutual delight and joy; and may each of us who preach and hear, receive our proper portion of the everlasting recompence and glory which shall be assigned to those who are faithful, by Jesus our Saviour and our Judge, *to whom be dominion and praise for ever and ever.* Amen.

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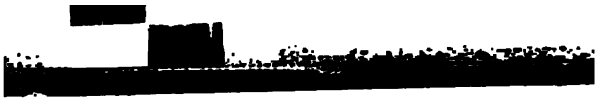
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